



Mystical Rome V 2.0- July Release
Morra Universal Cinematic Game System

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Chapter Eight: Genre: Mystical Rome

"Which death is preferable to every other? 'The unexpected'."

— Gaius Julius Caesar

Beware the Ides of March! We remember a world where mighty Caesar ignored this warning and paid the ultimate price. What if, however, the Three Soothsayers were wizards of unimaginable power and could foresee not only one future, but all possible futures?

In the world of *Mystical Rome*, Julius Caesar still failed to take heed, but faithful Marc Antony did not, and paid the ultimate price for his loyalty, forever altering the destiny of the Eternal City. Twenty years after the Soothsayers whispered their dire warning, Caesar still reigns over the unified Roman Empire. The oracles who saved him now operate a notorious academy, where they instruct the sons and daughters of elite families in the eldritch arts. The only obstacles preventing Rome's domination of the entire world are the barbarous Caledonians and the seemingly invincible Parthian Empire.

A central moment in history radically altered — Caesar lives, Antony dies, and, most importantly, magic and myth return to the world, along with monsters from the abyss. What would the world look like, twenty years later? Discover a plethora of potential storylines as players and Directors explore an alternate historical timeline of family and social warfare, and religious maneuvering with themes of the search for dark mystery, the lust for power, the desire for freedom, and the ideals of a fallen Republic.

Mystical Rome Credits

Developer: Jason Andrew

Writers: Jason Andrew, Andrea Barr, JN Childs, April Douglas, Renee Ritchie, and Brendan Whaley

Editor: Rachel Judd and J. Childs

Subject Matter Expert: James Davey

Following are the recommended guidelines for running the *Mystical Rome* Genre:

Target Audience

The target audience for *Mystical Rome* is the center of a cultural Venn diagram including those who enjoy fantasy, but who are dissatisfied with the Tolkienian tropes dominating the fantasy Umbrella Genre for the last hundred years; alternative history fans who enjoy wondering, *what would have happened if*; and fans of dirty political drama and satire. The Rome of antiquity, and her legends and histories, weighed heavily on the minds of the Founding Fathers of the United States as they worked together to build a new nation. The similarities of the two cultures don't stop there, as both are noble and dastardly. The audience for *Mystical Rome* wants to experience both the light and the dark, then be offered a real choice, and play out the consequences.

Rating and Descriptors: R

Mystical Rome merges the gritty, bloody history of antiquity with fantastical elements derived from classical myths and legends. This world depicts extreme brutality, casual profanity, and unthinking depravity. *Mystical Rome* contains blood and gore, intense violence, strong sexual content, depictions of drug and alcohol use (and abuse), slavery and human trafficking, and the

exploration of what human rights mean in the ancient world. The material contained within this Genre is an attempt to simulate a historical portrayal of ancient Roman society, and the intensity of the content suggests an authentic representation of that period without being gratuitous.

Writer's Room Commentary: Consent Calibrations for Mystical Rome

This Genre ventures forth into the dark places of the human psyche. Writers and Directors must discuss these themes, and their own personal limitations, before playing. Adjust the rating as needed to better suit the needs of your own series. Some players are not interested in playing out all of horrific details of this time period, or think the tone too depressing. Likewise, as the great director Alfred Hitchcock showed in the immortal shower scene in *Psycho*, sometimes less is more. The human imagination shows such terrors that it's difficult to compete. Do what's best for your series. For more information, see **Chapter Six: Director's Primer: Consent Calibration Techniques**, page xx.

Mystical Rome Inspiration

Histories: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon; *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* by Mary Beard; *The Roman Triumph*, by Mary Beard; and *The Neighborhoods of Augustan Rome* by J. Bert Lott.

Movies: *Ben Hur* (dir. William Wyler); *Caligula* (dirs. Tinto Brass, Bob Guccione, and Giancarlo Lui); *Clash of the Titans* (dir. Desmond Davis); *Cleopatra* (dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz); *Gladiator* (dir. Ridley Scott); *The Last Days of Pompeii* (dir. Mario Bonnard); and *Spartacus* (dir. Stanley Kubrick).

Novels and Plays: *I, Claudius*, by Robert Graves; *Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare; the Marcus Didius Falco series by Lindsey Davis; and *Mystical Rome*, by Jason Andrew.

Television: *Game of Thrones* (created by David Benioff & D. B. Weiss); *Rome* (created by John Milius, William J. MacDonald, & Bruno Heller); and *Spartacus* (created by Steven S. DeKnight).

Writer's Room Commentary: Historical Accuracy

Mark Twain might have said, "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story", or maybe he didn't. The truth might never be known, and, in some ways, gets in the way of a good story. Some of the inspirational works listed above took great pains to be historically accurate and pay homage to the culture and thought of the time. Others are sword and scandal adventures, transcending their genre and finding their own truth in the story.

Mystical Rome contains a good deal of research, baseless speculation, and some wild inaccuracies that make for a good story. Some of the details of Roman society were plucked from the Early Empire period of Rome, as enacted and enforced by Emperor Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. In this reality, he's known as Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy, the Governor of Egypt, still

named as Caesar's heir. The Emperor is a genius tactician and not above using the ideas of his adopted son to further his ends.

Strict attention to detail is the mark of a good writer. A great writer also knows when to ignore such details for the sake of the story. We recommend the Writer's Room do likewise when running their own sessions.

Mystical Rome Budget

The recommended budget for *Mystical Rome* is Major Motion Picture / Prime Time, to reflect the heroic nature of characters playing for the stakes of worldwide power with the addition of the Soothsayers and their magic. Characters with inhuman levels of attributes could be legendary heroes or enhanced via magic, be it from the Soothsayers or the ancient horrors unleashed by the razing of Atlantis.

All characters begin with the following points during character creation:

- Attributes: 10 points (to distribute across all four Attributes).
- Skills: 12 points (to distribute across all your Skills).
- Qualities: 10 points to spend on any Quality up to the Budget's ceiling.

Mystical Rome Archetypes

Mystical Rome is a Genre that explores the trials and tribulations of life inside of the greatest metropolis known to the ancient world. The Three Soothsayers forever alter Rome's destiny when they intervene into the assassination of Caesar on that fateful Ides of March. The War of Infinite Regress re-introduces magic to the world and unleashes unspeakable horrors, once banished forever to the rim of existence, on an unsuspecting populace.

To explore the universe of *Mystical Rome*, the custom Archetypes for this setting include common professions of an average Roman (see **Chapter Two: Create the Genre Archetypes**, page xx). A character's profession defines how she experiences life in *Mystical Rome*, her political beliefs, and her social standing within the city. These Archetypes cover the widest range of experiences; but if you wish to explore a special concept, work with your Director to define your concept as an Archetype.

The following custom Archetypes are available for play within *Mystical Rome*:

Artisan

Motto: Labor Omnia Vincit. (Latin: Hard Work Conquers All.)

Signa Romanum: A chisel

Description: The old Greek philosophers taught that for a mortal, creation stands closest to divinity.

Rare is the Patrician who deigns to spend the time and sweat required for mastery of any trade, but a scant few dabble in weaving, poetry, and other so-call "noble arts." Plebeians thrive in this field, taking advantage of the city's great need for skilled workers and artisans to build her temples, design her luxurious bathhouses, and keep Rome's technological edge sharp against her enemies.

Artisans of Rome built the Aqueduct of Segovia, the Amphitheatre of Nimes, and, of course, the Coliseum. Rome seeks out these workers. Any servant can sling a shovel, but it takes knowledge and training to build a heated bathhouse, arm the mighty legions of Rome, construct aqueducts and temples, and create the roads. The Caesarian reforms mandates skilled labor must be fairly compensated, and even enslaved artisans can now earn their freedom after twenty years of working for the city.

The rise of the Collegia's collective power, and their open support of the Imperator and his policies, ensure the wealth and prestige of these men and women rises along with Caesar's. Some among the dying Patrician class feel society pushes too far and too quickly from the founding of the Republic. They argue the Republic is divine and perfect, and change only sullies the greatness of Rome. Artisans who pour their sweat and tears into transforming the Eternal City into a work of living art quietly disagree.

Playing an Artisan: You might be mortal. Your flesh might decay. However, if the gods favor you and your hands, your works can last for a millennium and your name joins the august company of such legendary crafters as Skopas (the sculptor famous for depicting Aphrodite and the head of goddess Hygieia, daughter of Asclepius) and Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (author of *De Architectura*, and the designer who popularized the theory that architecture is a unification of art and science).

You work with your hands and your mind, your *logos*, to create miracles and wonders around the world. You could be a gifted artist blessed by the Muses, or a tradesman with mastery of a valuable craft, such as masonry or civil engineering. Some in the Republic consider the work of your hands and mind, creating

something for nothing, to be the closest to divinity a human can experience.

For more information about the Art and Technology of Rome, see page xx.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Body, +1 Mind

Special Qualities: see **Artisan Qualities, page xx.**

Barbarian

Motto: (Latin: None can understand their primitive language)

Signa Romanum: A cloak of fur, a beard, and an axe

Description: The term Barbarian comes from the Greek βάρβαρος, meaning someone who does not speak the language or understand civilized customs. Naturally, when the Romans “borrowed” and rebranded the Greek’s culture, traditions, and religions, they maintained their prejudice against the uncivilized tribes of Gaul, Germany, and Britannia.

To Rome, it does not matter what tribe you came from—you aren’t Roman, not yet. These proud people might not have experience building cities, maintaining aqueducts, and leveraging the unique military tactics of the Roman empire, but they do possess fascinating cultures, a fighting prowess all of their own, and a superior knowledge of the wilderness and bushcraft. Many of these so-called barbarians join the legions as scouts or auxiliary troops to earn citizenship for themselves and their families. Rome captures others and provides a pathway to freedom and improving their lot by returning to trades and skills they know.

Most Barbarians refuse to completely meld with the Roman culture, and citizens consider them outlanders. Yet, you make your place in the shadows. You are not beholden to the clerics or the bureaucrats, and you can do as you please with only your honor and strength as shields. Sometimes, Romans hire you on as house guards, or as a member of a trading crew seeking a little extra muscle.

Playing a Barbarian: You are a stranger in a strange land, where you barely speak the language but know how to make a living as bodyguard, caravan rider, a ranger, a huntsman, or a wilderness scout. Plenty of coin and easy living on the outskirts of the city exists, if you can stand to deal with those stinking Romans. They

claim to be civilized in one breath, and then cheat you out of your lands and life.

While you might profit from the city, you haven't succumbed to her charms. Yet, you know what's coming and what choice do you have? The old ways die, roads replace green fields, and aqueducts dam rivers. Only that which adapts survives. Perhaps, someday, you will rise up and bring an Empire to its knees.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Body, +1 Mind

Special Qualities: see Barbarian Qualities, page xx.

Bureaucrat

Motto: Omnia Mala Exempla Modis Iure Uti Coepit. (Latin: All bad precedents begin as justifiable measures.)

Signa Romanum: Curia Julia (Senate building)

Description: Rome is a true cosmopolitan metropolis, ruling over more than twenty percent of the world's population. Such a mass of people requires a great deal of organization, employing thousands of bureaucrats, municipal leaders, judges, politicians, and diplomats. You serve the glory of the Republic, standing over its citizens and ensuring the machine of government continues to press ever onward.

It is fashionable and profitable for male Patricians to dabble in politics, getting involved with the intricate bureaucracy governing Rome and her Empire. Patricians seek to make politics their trade in service to their family and follow the *curus honorum* ('course of offices'). This colloquially describes the career path for a Roman politician, and the age at which he becomes eligible for certain offices. This path requires serving the public good in a series of offices in ascending importance before one qualifies for Senator. Those Patricians who attain higher office, during the earliest year they qualify to serve each office, make "it in their year."

A surprising number of minor bureaucrats are Plebeians who make their fortune in the municipal slave trade. These bureaucrats achieve rank more slowly, but those dedicated to this path find or create the necessary opportunities for advancement. Now that Rome extends her reach to include hundreds of tribes and former nations, the Plebeian bureaucrats find their own star on the rise within the social order.

An embittered rivalry wraps up a symbiotic relationship between the bureaucrats and the clergy, as many of their spheres of influence, especially when concerning the mob of Rome, overlap. Together, they ensure the poorest have grain, public works and rituals are funded and attended, and civic order is maintained.

Playing a Bureaucrat: You are a cog, large or small, in the great machine of Rome. You lead, organize, and manage the people of the Republic: as a local administrator, a civil judge or officer, or even an elected politician. Whether a Plebeian or a Patrician, you wield your social acumen and keen political mind to bring order to the masses, organize workers, and otherwise get things done.

You could be a lowly bureaucrat organizing the affairs of a minor neighborhood, a judge ruling over legal affairs concerning the docks, or even a Quaestor or Censor serving the great Republic at the highest levels. What matters is Rome forever endures, and yours are the hands that help her keep its commerce flowing and her people fed and sheltered.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Heart, +1 Mind

Special Qualities: see **Bureaucrat Qualities**, page xx.

Clergy

Motto: Honor Virtutis Praemium. (Latin: Esteem is the reward of virtue.)

Signa Romanum: A sigil of the specific god or goddess who rules over the situation. A sword for Mars, a trident for Neptune, a lamp for a Vestal Virgin, etc.

Description: Few Patricians join the clergy, but for young women of noble families it's fashionable to join a few highly respectable cults and mysteries, such as the Vestal Virgins. Plebeians and freedmen see the clergy as a way to wash away their name, joining a celestial lineage of great power and prominence. Romans are practical worshippers, giving homage to any god who suits their needs.

The rise of the Soothsayers, and their Academy, sharply curtails the clergy's power. Augurs still exist, but only in dark alleys or as secret advisors. The mob views the loss of the Sibylline Books to the Soothsayers as a sign of whom the gods truly favor. Despite the Soothsayer's revelation of true magic and eldritch

monsters in the world, the mob's faith is still strong. The State still builds temples, maintains the calendars, and sate the people through festivals. As evidence of their strong faith, many still come to the priests so they intercede on person's behalf for spiritual matters.

Playing a Cleric: You serve the divine in all things; their *logos*, their divine spark, lives within your breast. You dare to hear the words of the gods and speak their truth with your tongue. You serve as a member of the august clergy of Rome, whether as a humble street preacher who tends to former slaves and the lost, or as one of the most holy pontiffs of the State religion, where you conduct religious rituals, ceremonies, and festivals. You perform religious matters with gravitas and exactness, so as to maintain the god's good will and favor of Rome. Rome only scorns the monotheists for their narrow-minded beliefs.

Depending upon the god you serve, you could bless marriages and new business ventures, prepare the legions for war, or announce the gods' will at celebrations. You serve the divine and the gods still have a role to play among humanity.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Heart, +1 Soul

Special Qualities: see **Clergy Qualities, page xx.**

Criminal

Motto: *Auribus Teneo Lupum.* (Latin: I hold a wolf by the ears.)

Signa Romanum: A sap (a short club of wood and/or leather, used to knock people unconscious).

Description: Criminals live outside of the law. If caught offending the wrong Roman or breaking the law in the wrong place, they risk losing a hand or being strangled to death. Survival, much less freedom and creature comforts, are rare. Only the most savage thrive in such an environment. Many former slaves escape their masters only to become involved in the one place that will accept and shield them. Thieves have no honor, except to protect one's friends and hope they don't cut your throat while you sleep.

While criminals exist in all of Rome, Aventine Hill is the most infamous of criminal locations, leaving a vast number of the docks along the Tiber river under gang control. Patricians often

financially support these gangs, using them as pawns in complex power plays.

The bureaucrats and clergy turn a blind eye to the criminal underworld. Corruption and graft are just another unsavory aspect of life. The stoic Roman heart believes crime will always exist because people are weak; the powerful tolerate some amount of crime, so long as the criminals limit themselves to the lower classes and avoid disrupting commerce.

Playing a Criminal: You exist in the shadows of the great Empire, thieving and murdering to survive in her twisted alleys and hidden streets. Few make such a life for themselves by choice, instead falling prey to fortune and circumstance. You could be a starving pickpocket, a murderous cut-throat, or a member of a prestigious gang in the underworld Collegia.

For more information, see **Crime and Punishment**, page xx.
Attribute Bonus: + 1 Body, +1 Heart

Special Qualities: see **Criminal Qualities**, page xx.

Druid

Motto: *Nos omnes vivere in umbra ex virid.* (Latin: We all live in the shadow of the Green.)

Signa Romanum: An oak branch

Description: Known as advisors, healers, scholars, and magicians among the Celts and the Caledonians, this sacred order is the vanguard of the revolt against the Imperator and the Empire of Rome. Their name descends from the Celtic words for seer and sorcerer, and they originally hail from Britannia, where they serve as advisers and teachers, keepers of the mystery of the wilds and places not meant for men.

Taught the secrets of the forests and art of skin changing by the Morrigan, the Druids exist in all of the tribes of the Caledonian alliance, spreading to the shores of Europa and into the Germanic tribes. While the Soothsayers see all possible futures, the Roman seers know a terrible fate comes in the form of the Green and the death of all they hold dear.

The Imperator forbids the religious practice of druidism by citizens of the Republic, naming crucifixion as the punishment if caught. During the Gallic Wars, Caesar orchestrated one of the

largest genocides in record history, and eliminated entire generations that worshiped these foreign gods and nature.

This mystical order became the symbol of rebellion from the Empire. Some say Brutus has a Druid advisor, who warns him of a future where the Green is dead and machines swallow everything.

Playing a Druid: You are the divine. You feel it in all living things, in the trees and the animals they shelter in their sacred groves. You serve, teach, and lift the spirits of others while healing their bodies. A bright world is possible, if only humanity can be taught to turn away from Rome's glittering promises.

You serve the world to keep balance. You could be a member of the Caledonians, the Germanic tribes, or the Gauls. You could even be a freed Roman citizen hiding among the masses. You have no church, for the whole world of green is sacred. Rome, and her tyrant ruler, bring imbalance to the world and you feel harm's echo in the sacred green. It's time to balance the scales.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Heart, +1 Soul

Special Qualities: see Druid Qualities, page xx.

Gladiator

Motto: *Ave, Imperator, Morituri te Salutant.* (Latin: Hail, Emperor, we who are about to die salute thee.)

Signa Romanum: A rudis (a wooden gladius or rod)

Description: Gladiators most often come from captured foreign soldiers (such as the infamous Thracian known only by the moniker Spartacus), criminals sentenced to death, or slaves raised and trained in the brutal blood sport from an early age. Those who fight earn the adoration of the crowd, rewards in coin, and are sometimes even granted their freedom, including a pardon for all former crimes.

Some poor souls volunteer to test their mettle in the arena, seeking the fame and coin that comes with victory. Fallen freedman, broke or bored Patricians, or even veterans of the legions become gladiators of their own free will. Women are among the most popular gladiators, such as the fearsome Achillia of Halicarnassus, who is said to descend from a lost Amazonian tribe along the Rhine River. Single women who

manage to survive the arena often have the coin to live independent lives as celebrities, out from under the control of their paterfamilias. Beloved encyclopedist and doctor Aulus Cornelius Celsus protests such behavior before the Curia, referring to them as a "disgrace to Rome", and challenging men to imagine their wives coming home with armor and gladiator gear.

Playing a Gladiator: You are not a soldier, neither are you a mere mercenary or a common thug knifing someone in a dark alley. You are a god among mortals, a legend in the sand and arena – a gladiator. You were branded into the brotherhood, given specialized training at a *ludus* (gladiator academy), and won the adoration of the Roman public. Bouts could be solo matches, chariot races, wild beast hunts, or even naval bouts mirroring old battles. Winners become heroes to the fickle mob, who often determine life or death by the roar of their applause. Losers are the bloody grist in the endless death mill of the arena.

Victory brings riches, fame, and even a certain amount of clout. Wealthy clients might even purchase vials of sweat and dirt scraped from your body after a match for health and beauty tonics, or pay more for certain romantic favors. It's a paradise built upon the sand, waiting for the oncoming tide. However, so long as you risk your life in the arena, any error or misfortune could render your life forfeit at any moment. The mob is fickle, seeking only to sate their bloodlust. When they turn on you, it's your blood they will demand when next they thirst. For more information, see **Panem et Circenses – the Arena**, page xx.

Attribute Bonus: + 2 Body

Special Qualities: see **Gladiator Qualities**, page xx.

Merchant

Motto: *Caveat Emptor*. (Latin: Let the buyer beware).

Signa Romanum: A dupondius (a bronze-cast coin)

Description: Once, Rome measured wealth in land and the Patricians held all of the best acreages in Rome and outer Italia. In the aftermath of the Ides of March rebellion and assassination, Caesar broke this monopoly as he punished the Senators who were party to such treason. Mercy once was the hallmark of mighty Caesar, but no more. Caesar forfeited the conspirators' right to their lands, giving them to resettled veterans of the legions. Those with coin and cunning purpose

took Hades' favor, and parted lands from the gullible. Now, new families of power rise in Rome, drawing wealth from other sources.

The legions conquer the known world, but the merchants reap the benefit by reselling the spoils of war: slaves, art, and goods of the conquered. They utilize the roads of Rome to create dynamic, protected, trade routes. Despite the Caesarian Reforms, meant to encourage the hiring of Plebeians and freedman by limiting the number of slaves who could be used on a single project in Italia, the cancer of slavery spread throughout the Empire.

The Patricians consider the handling of coin distasteful, but merchants know money is merely a tool that balances power between the high and the low. Trade is the one profession that can be entered into without family name or reputation. Many merchants are the freed slaves and low-born who rose from nothing to power through trade. Not all trade is unsavory; many souls make decent livings while improving the community. Yet, to do business in the Eternal City is to deal with graft, corruption, and brutality.

Roleplaying a Merchant: Coin and shrewd business acumen are your weapons; your war is not waged for glory or honor, but profit. The Patricians refuse to even touch coins, and so it falls to the middle-men, the merchants, to buy and sell what the city requires, and, even more importantly, desires. You know how to track inventory, procure the best loans from moneylenders, and navigate the complex bureaucracy of the Eternal City, including dealing with certain members of its criminal population. You have connections within the municipals, the clergy, and, perhaps one day, you could possess the wealth to stand with the Senate.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Heart, +1 Mind

Special Qualities: see **Merchant Qualities, page xx.**

Legionnaire

Motto: *Senatus Populusque Romanus.* (Latin: For the Senate and People of Rome).

Signa Romanum: Golden Eagle

Description: All legionnaires serve for a period of twenty-five years, unless given special dispensation by a general or the

Senate. The Marian reforms ensure service always guarantees citizenship, even for foreign nationals. The last five years of service are always lighter duties, often in a civilian capacity at home. However, by law and tradition, once a soldier crosses the Rubicon river, he immediately reverts back to a citizen unless given special dispensation.

Life in the military is hard. It breeds hard men who believe in doing whatever's required without sentiment. The citizens of Rome live in both terror and awe of its armies, always afraid a charismatic general will lead an open revolt against the Senate and, now, the Emperor. The traitor Brutus still controls three legions in Britannia, where he surely trains British barbarians in Roman military techniques. Some whisper the truth is even worse: these lost legions are now native, running into battle naked and painted blue, willing to consume the flesh of their enemies.

Playing a Legionnaire: You are a citizen-soldier in the world's greatest military power, capable of conquering enemy territory, building roads that encourage commerce, and bringing the civilization of Rome to the barbarians, whether they wish it or not. Each legion is a combination mobile army and brutally efficient government, which has a unique culture of service and glory dating back to when kings ruled Rome.

Whatever your rank and whatever your social class, you live to serve the Republic of the Eternal City, and you let nothing stop you from enforcing her will. For more information about the culture and structure of the legions of Rome and their legionaries, see the Legions of Rome, page xx.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Body, +1 Mind

Special Qualities: see **Legionnaire Qualities**, page xx.

Soothsayer

Motto: *Praemonitus Praemunitus.* (Latin: Forewarned is forearmed).

Signa Romanum: A human skull

Description: All Soothsayers serve the academy for a period of ten years, either as a magister (teacher) or enforcer. In exchange, those who graduate earn a lifetime's membership to the school's gargantuan library, access to rare herbs and

minerals required for rituals, and, most importantly, a constant stream of communication with the Three Soothsayers.

Every Patrician family sends their children for testing, hoping one of the academy's magisters finds a spark of inherent talent. Some of the great Patrician families, lacking such luck, offer patronage in the form of political influence or sacks of filled with coin. Few students who join in this manner manage to succeed, but there's great prestige even in limited training. Plebeians and freedmen also send their hopefuls, and, thus far, succeed in equal measure. Surprisingly, even slaves purchased at random show some natural talent for magic. The Soothsayer's Academy turns a blind eye to social standing or political sway.

Playing a Soothsayer: Through tireless hours of study, bloody sacrifice, and the tutelage of the Soothsayer Academy, you mastered the subtle and terrifying art of magic. With but a gesture, together with the understanding of mystical principals and the proper application of energy, you can perform real magic – miracles that were once the province of the gods. Eternally bound by loyalty and oath to the Soothsayer Academy, you navigate the bonds of family and politics as an outsider—as a mortal empowered with the force of a god.

In return for their protection and favored status, the Soothsayer Academy provides the Empire with new magicians, who aid their attempt to expand Rome's reach and position in the world.

Attribute Bonus: + 1 Mind, +1 Soul

Special Qualities: See **Soothsayers Qualities**, page xx.

Genre Factions

Cato the Black was believed to state that Rome rules the known world, but lacks the discipline to govern herself. In Rome, numerous factions attempt to wrest control from one another, eternally struggling for power and order in a city where fortunes turn on the whims of the gods. What they lack in discipline, they make up for in political machination and the will to succeed.

Patricians

Historian Titus Livy recorded that the first one hundred men appointed as Senators by Romulus himself were granted the *cognomen ex virtute* (name by virtue) of *patres*, meaning fathers. Thereafter, their clans (called *gens*, or collectively

gentes) were known as Patricians. While this origin story is dogmatically correct, adhering to Roman mythology and the accepted theology of the founding of the city, most rationalists presume the Patricians were the leaders and land-owners of the first tribes who settled the seven hills of Rome.

The twin pillars of Patrician social power stem from a near-monopoly on land ownership within Rome and the length of their *gentes'* Roman citizenship. Many eschew direct worship of the gods, and instead consider the Republic itself divine. The civil wars, and banishment of the Senate Liberators, marked the decline of many Patrician *gentes*, leaving them as names on dusty lists. Some stave off this extinction via adoption of cadet Plebeian *gentes*, such as the Julii Caesares adopting the equestrian branch of the Plebeian gens Octavia.

Under the Caesarian reforms, Patricians no longer enjoy more special rights than those possessed by an average citizen. However, many believe the gods favor the Patricians and their presence adds social weight to any occasion they deign to participate in. Romans commonly say the Patricians are the foundation of the Republic, and their blood is the mortar which keeps the walls standing strong. Romans accept the word of a Patrician as true, and the courts almost always favor one unless presented with overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

All Patricians benefit from the following legal and cultural traditions:

- Cannot be judged, punished, nor detained without a trial via the regional magistrate (if minor Patrician family) or the Senate (if major Patrician family).
- Cannot be accused of lying or perjury, based on the honor of their house, without a trial via the regional magistrate (if minor Patrician family) or the Senate (if major Patrician family).
- Can be sentenced to a lesser punishment due to their family's service to Rome via the regional magistrate (if minor Patrician family) or the Senate (if major Patrician family).
- Always the first to be seated at any religious or public festival.

Patrician Gentes Maiores (The Major Patrician Families)

Among the Patrician families (known as *gentes*), Rome considers six as the most noble houses, who best represent the great virtues of Rome. The Senate traditionally chooses their Speaker from this august group, and the body opposes efforts to change this custom.

Some of these ancient and storied families fell onto hard and desperate times, most notably the Valerii. However, despite the Caesarian reforms, the majority of Patrician *gentes* still flourish and control important positions in the Senate and Rome. Many citizens of Rome believe these storied familial bloodlines to be as sacred as the Republic of Rome, and are reluctant to take any direct action against them.

To become a member of one of the major Patrician houses, characters must purchase the **Quality: Patrician Gentis Maiores**, page xx. Typically, the character purchases this Quality during character creation. However, if the storyline warrants a change in status, such as the classical movie tropes of identity switched at birth, the revelation of one's true father, being adopted, or marrying above one's station, the character can purchase the Quality after character creation. Purchasing this Quality unlocks **Factional Qualities**, see page xx.

Aemilii

Legend says this Patrician *gente* descends from Amulius, the tyrannical uncle of Romulus and Remus, who deposed his brother Numitor to become king of Alba Longa. Most do not repeat such myths in public, however, for even the mighty Aemilii must publicly appear to support Caesar, especially in the current political climate.

Historian Titus Livy claims the Aemilii founder is Mamercus, the son of Numa Pompilius and the legendary second king of Rome. The family name comes from the persuasiveness and cunning of their founder's words or from Mamercus being a fierce warrior. Others claim twin brothers once battled the enemies of Rome under the banner of Mars. The eldest bore the cognomen *Aemilius, He Who Conquers*. The younger brother was Valerius, founder of the Valerii line. The centuries set these two cousin Patrician families against each other. Whatever their origins, the Aemilii were a part of Rome and her inner

workings from the time of kings and legends to the current Republic and her Empire.

Astonishingly, the Aemilii recently publicly allied themselves with the Cornelii, despite Caesar's displeasure. Their paterfamilias is Livius Aemilius Broccha, the richest man in all of Rome, and only his appetite exceeds his wealth. His sister Junia Aemilia Ornela is the unspoken Materfamilias, since his wife died after giving him six sons.

The Domus Aemilium (House of the Aemilii) is located in Region III: Isis et Serapis (see The Body Politic: 14 Regions, page xx).

The Aemilii stockpile wealth generation after generation. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality can also purchase the Quality: Midas Touch (page xx) for half the normal cost, rounded down.

Claudii

The Claudii, sometimes written in the old histories as the Clodia, occupied the highest offices of state since the dawn of Rome. The current era notes their overwhelming pride for Patrician status, as well as some bitterness over the Caesarian reforms and the subsequent removal of their special privileges. They distinguish themselves with a haughty defiance of any other gentes' claims to superiority, disdain for the laws restricting their rights, and coldness of heart in all dealings with others.

While the other major Patrician families speak of their origins during the time of kings, the Claudii formed after the founding of the Republic. A young Rome warred with all of the surrounding tribes, including the Sabine. A Sabine military leader, Attius Clausus, came to Rome with his soldiers during these early years. Clausus offered the Senate of Rome their eternal loyalty, and the state rewarded him with a unique, grandfathered-in Patrician citizenship. The state also gave followers land on the far side of the Anio river, where they formed the core of what became the "Old Claudian" tribe.

Many believe the God Vulcan touched the Claudii, for they are clever, well-versed in design, exceptionally rich with

their gold mines, and sometimes their children are born with uncommon congenital deformities. This causes some scandal in high society, and few other Patrician families wish to marry their children into their gens.

Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, the former paterfamilias, remains a strong supporter of the Emperor, despite the Caesarian reforms. He slipped into a coma due to his advancing years and his elder daughter, Marcia Livia Drusus Claudianus Solus, rose to become the Materfamilias. While the Aemilii can't oppose Caesar directly, they can and do frequently oppose Claudianus in the Senate.

The Domus Claudium (House of the Claudi) is located in Region V: Esquiline (see *The Body Politic: 14 Regions*, page xx).

Vulcan's blessing brings either deformity or madness to all Claudii. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality can also purchase the Quality: Mythic Ancestry (page xx) for half the normal cost, rounded down.

Cornelii

The origin of the Cornelii is lost to the fog of history. Their nomen suggests the cognomen *Corneus*, which means 'horny from having thick or callused skin.' Tradition holds the Cornelii first tamed the wild seven hills of Rome, and were Rome's first farmers and land-holders. Historian Titus Livy so boldly says that the Cornelii laid the foundation for the Eternal City. This family sired many lesser Patricians, and their adoption of Plebeian gentes was instrumental in many victories for Rome, including the Punic Wars.

Staunch defenders of the Republic, and not-so-quiet supporters of Brutus and his Senate Liberators, circulate rumors that Publius Cornelius Scipio Salvito sent men and gold to Britannia. At least the Emperor believed, and then publicly forgave the Cornelii and accepted their continued donations to the Republic's granaries to supplement the income from Alexandria. The implication is clear, and for nearly a decade the Cornelii were social exiles. None openly impugn their family honor, but polite society quietly excluded them from the best parties and events.

Recently, the richest man in Rome made their redemption his cause. Manius Aemilius Vetus, along with the younger brother of Marcus Antony, Senator Lucius Antony Creticus, openly embrace the Cornelii. He reminds Caesar of the potential war with the Parthian Empire, and that victory in Africa is assured if a Scipio of the Cornelii line leads the battle. The Sibylline Books support this, which say only a Rome united under a king can win again the Parthians.

The Domus Corneliorum (House of the Cornelii) is located in Region VI: Alta Semita (see The Body Politic: 14 Regions, page xx).

This family is rich in terms of land and people. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality can also purchase the Quality: Horde of Followers (page xx) for half the normal cost, rounded down.

Fabii

The Fabia established themselves forever among the greatest of Patrician families when Rome invested three brothers with seven successive consulships early in the history of the Republic. They won eternal glory at the tragic Battle of Cremera, when the best of several generations was wiped out in a futile defense of Rome.

Once, the Fabii were staunch supporters of the aristocratic policies of the Senate, favoring the rights of Patricians. During the revenge war against the Veientes, the Fabii, Valerii, and many other Plebeian families only achieved victory through cooperation. Thereafter, the Fabii pledged to support whatever was best for Rome. This causes some tension with their ancient allies, the Claudii.

The Fabii are staunch believers and devout supporters of the state religion. They possess deep ties to the Luperci, the priests who perform the sacred rites of the ancient religious festival, Lupercalia. They also worship Hercules, maintaining their family descends directly from the demigod, who visited Italy a generation before the Trojan War and sired the three brothers who founded the Fabii tribe.

Historian Titus Livy suggests it's more likely the first Fabii were the followers of the brothers Romulus and Remus, and offered up sacrifices in the cave of the Lupercal at the base of the Palatine Hill (which became the origin of Lupercalia). The tribe was shepherds and hunters of wolves, and hard men and women born from an uncivilized time and place.

The Fabii continue to support Rome and her gods. They oppose fashionable stoicism and remember a time when instinct and faith brought them out of the darkness. If they have opinions about the Imperator and the Soothsayers, they keep such thoughts to themselves. However, they openly mourn the deaths of the Quindecemviri (see **Pagan Rome: Quindecemviri**, page xx) and the Augurs (see **Pagan Rome: Augurs**, page xx) on the Ides of March, and that alone is a risky position to take. Thus far, no Fabii are graduates of the Soothsayer Academy.

The Domus Fabiiorum (House of the Fabii) is located in Region V: Esquiline (see *The Body Politic: 14 Regions*, page xx).

The Fabii pride themselves on their long military tradition. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality can also purchase the Quality: Tough (page xx) at half the normal cost, rounded down.

Sulpicii

The Sulpicii are one of the most distinguished and ancient families in Rome. This gen produced multiple, concurrent Consuls and other worthy and distinguished politicians. They were instrumental in driving out the Tarquins and establishing the Republic. The Sulpicii founded a number of prosperous Plebeian families descended from their freemen, to which they still maintain close ties. Notable characteristics and virtues of this family include a passionate devotion to family and the arts, their liberal treatment of women, and a sense of civic responsibility.

The legions of Rome supplied the materials, but the Sulpicii transformed Rome from a city of brick to one of marble. Many notable, famous artisans come from their Patrician and Plebeian gens. Currently, Supicia, the daughter of noted orator Servius Sulpicius Rufus, brings

honor to the house as a famous poetess. The current Paterfamilias of the Sulpicii, Severius Sulpicius Longus, seems content to allow the controversy his cousin by blood generates, even the accusations that she couldn't possibly write such elegant poetry.

During the reign of the Emperor, the Sulpicii remain silent. They continue to concentrate on the real glory of Rome: its culture and art. Yet, they remain close, if non-political allies, of the Aemilii.

The Domus Sulpiciirum (House of the Sulpicii) is located in Region III: Isis et Serapis (see The Body Politic: 14 Regions, page xx).

The Sulpicii are patrons of artisans, and over the years reaped many benefits. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality can also purchase the Quality: Major MacGuffin (page xx) for half the normal cost, rounded down.

Valeriii

The Valeriii are dying. They have no cadet houses. Their current paterfamilias, Quintus Valerius Orca, led them to financial ruin to appease his former wife, Junia Aemilius Orlena. They were exiled to Alexandria for failing to pay their debts. Junia divorced Orca, claiming senility and asked for her family to return under the protection of the new Paterfamilias, her brother, Livius Aemilius Broccha. She returned to Rome appearing twenty years younger, claiming the Egyptian healers rejuvenated her.

In days past, many great leaders of the legions and Senate came from this gens. Much of their prestige stems from their leadership in removing the last kings of Rome and exiling the Tarquins. During the transition to the Republic, the Valeriii were so trusted they were granted royal power on behalf of their tribes. Now, they lack a Paterfamilias, and despite a military victory in Alexandria, their future is in doubt. Other minor Patrician families jump at the chance for their seat of power

Their early honors resulted in a number of unusual privileges and writs of exceptions awarded to the family,

including the right to bury their dead within the city walls—a right only granted to the Imperial family and former Consuls of Rome. They also hold a special balcony at the Circus Maximus, with a unique throne that not even the Emperor enjoys, as well as a villa built by the legendary Publius Valerius Publicola (one of the first Consuls of Rome), with doors that open outward into the street to allow for a proper military defense. No other gentes receives such a defense, and these doors are an honor: a symbol of Rome's debt to this family. Other gentes might have political power or great wealth, but the fortunes of the Valerii lie in their deeds and inspiration of others.

Starting with Publius Valerius Publicola, the Valerii advocate for Plebeian causes, and help push through many laws granting them the full rights of Roman citizens. The former paterfamilias of the Valerii, Titus Valerius Perseus, was the senator who first sponsored the Caesarian reforms. While they lack Patrician cadet houses, the Valerii sponsor many Plebeian houses, even if they are too proud to take payment for their patronage. Titus Valerius Perseus himself shielded Caesar's body during that fateful Ides of March. To their critics, this is yet another sign of this fallen gens striving for the glories of ages past without considering the consequences of their deeds.

The Domus Valeriorum (House of the Valerii) is located in Region V: Esquiline (see *The Body Politic: 14 Regions*, page xx).

The blood of the Titus Valerius Perseus grows strong in the shadow of Caesar, such that the enemies of the Empire seek the lives of his children, citing ancient verses in the Sibylline Books. Members of this family with the Major Patrician Quality may also purchase the Quality: Hard to Kill (page xx) for half the normal cost, rounded down.

Patrician Gentes Minores (The Minor Patrician Families)

Over a hundred or more minor Patrician families, aligned under one of the Gentes Maiores, live in Rome. For example, the Julii Caesares are formally aligned with the Claudii.

This section contains a list of these minor houses, along with a simple description of what the family is known for during the

events of *Mystical Rome*. Little is known about many of these gentes, except for their appearances on important lists, coins, or official records. History addresses other houses, and players choosing these houses must discuss their options with the Director.

Directors and players are encouraged to expand upon the limited descriptions here:

Developer's Note: We're going to allow patrons to help us expand this section with the upcoming Morra Kickstarter.

- *Aquillia*: A gens with many Patrician and Plebeian branches, known for being traditionalists and sun worshippers.
- *Atilia*: Known for their support of the legions, and the rare willingness of a Patrician gens to dive into commerce.
- *Cloelia*: Descended from Clolius, a companion of Aeneas, and a cousin branch to the last kings of Rome.
- *Curtia*: Part of the Sabine tribe from the time of kings, made citizens of Rome after their surrender.
- *Foslia*: A gens with strong interest in shipping and trade, known for offering rare pleasures to their guests.
- *Furia*: A gens of Tusculan origin, known for their great tempers, wealth, and passion.
- *Gegania*: Descended from Gyas, who accompanied Aeneas from Italy to Troy. One of the noblest families of the Alban aristocracy, and were incorporated into the Roman state after that city's destruction by Tullus Hostilius.
- *Genucia*: Said to gifted by Minerva with incredible foresight. In the Time of the Soothsayers, they have more graduates of the Soothsayer Academy than any other gens.
- *Herminia*: Known for their roots as fishermen and bridge builders, allegedly the architects and first defenders of the great Sublician Bridge.
- *Horatia*: A small but legendary gens that hails from fabled Alba Longa, and is known for their heroes and horses.
- *Julia*: Of Alban origin, the Julii moved to Rome upon the destruction of Alba Longa. They claim descent from Ascanius, son of Aeneas, who is in turn the son of

Venus and Anchises. This small house almost faded into obscurity until the rise of Caesar and his adoption of the Plebeian gens Octavia, which breathed new life into the family.

- *Lartia*: A noble gens famous for their defense of Pons Sublicius in Lars Porsena's war against Rome.
- *Lucretia*: A cultured gens known for their skill with poetry, politics, and love.
- *Manlia*: A disgraced gens from the Latin city of Tusculum. Once revered for their loyalty, Marcus Manlius Capitolinus was tried for treason by the Senate two decades ago. He died in the arena, and his family was ordered to never again use the praenomen Marcus. They hunger for redemption.
- *Meneria*: Famous for their curly hair, this gens faded into obscurity in the Time of the Soothsayers.
- *Metilia*: A gens that moved to Rome following the destruction of Alba Longa. Known primarily from their deeds in the Punic Wars and avid support of the Emperor.
- *Minucia*: Known for their mercurial temperament and strong devotion to Stoic ideals to combat it.
- *Mucia*: A legendary gens descended from the hero Gaius Mucius Scaevola. Historian Titus Livy reports that as a young man, Mucius volunteered to sneak into the camp of Lars Porsena, the king of Clusium, then besieging Rome, and assassinate him. Unfamiliar with Etruscan dress, he mistook the king's secretary for the king himself and was captured. Later, Mucius demonstrated his bravery to his captors by thrusting his right hand into a brazier and standing silently as it burned. King Porsena could no longer stand the sight or smell of Mucius' burning hand and forced it out of the brazier. This sight of Roman bravery, and the promise of future assassinations, inspired Porsena to leave Rome.
- *Nautia*: Known for their service during the Samnite Wars, this gens seems to be fading, although it's said Caesar favors them.
- *Numicia*: A gens known for their service in the legions and the mines they own in Africa.
- *Papiria*: An old monied house with resources in land, mines, and shipping.

- *Pinaria*: Descended from Pinus, a son of Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome. In a sign of their devotion to the Republic, they surrendered their divine right of kingship. It's whispered that at private meals, they toast Brutus and prepare for the day he marches on Rome.
- *Pollia*: One of the original Servian tribes, considered important landowners during the Roman monarchy.
- *Postumia*: Noted old and wealthy Roman aristocracy, the Postumii faded for a time into obscurity until Caesar appointed a number of them to city offices to replace the disgraced and exiled Senate Liberators.
- *Quinctilia*: Descended from one of the followers who left Alba Longa after the brothers Romulus and Remus restored their grandfather, Numitor, to the throne. They offered up sacrifices in the Lupercal at the base of the Palatine Hill, which earned the god's blessing and became the foundation of the religious festival, Lupercalia.
- *Scipiones*: A branch of the Cornelii family, founded by Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, famous for their many victories in Africa, and a subsequent prophecy in the Sibylline Books concerning a future battle against the Parthian Empire. Every general, Senator, and Imperator knows never to send armies to Africa without a Scipio to lead them.
- *Sempronia*: An ancient gens known for their beauty and poise. They are well-liked and thought of as the reason Rome exists, to produce such civilized refinement. Their wealth derives from the huge dowries other families pay for the privilege of marrying Sempronia sons and daughters.
- *Sergia*: Descendants of the legendary Sergestus, one of the heroic Trojans who came to Italy with Aeneas. Four hundred years ago, Lucius Sergius Fidenas became Consul and attempted to become a tyrant and abolish the Senate. The Bruti stopped him, and condemned him to the arena. They disappeared from public life for centuries, until the Imperator forgave the gens.
- *Servilia*: An old gens believed to have a magical copper coin that grows or shrinks in size in proportion to their prosperity. They are the only conspirator Patrician family related to the Senate Liberators allowed to remain after the purge following the Ides of March,

because they threw themselves upon the mercy of Caesar and paid some secret, but believed to be very expensive, price.

- *Sestia*: Known for their light touch, disposition, and neutrality towards politics, but consumed with fashion, art, and the arena.
- *Siccia*: A quiet, almost rural gen with many farms, orchards, and slaves.
- *Tullia*: A solemn gen known for a tradition of public service and working in the lesser offices of the Republic.
- *Verginia*: Vocal supporters of the Imperator, this gens got rich off the slave trade and other imports from western Europe.
- *Veturia*: Legend has it during the Time of Kings, the armorer Mamurius Veturius crafted the sacred ancilia. The beauty of these twelve shields was such that Mars himself was pleased, and when they were placed in his temple the god promised he would forever aid the Eternal City against her enemies. Thus, the Veturia family are forever elevated, and continue to build great and terrible things for Rome.
- *Vitellia*: The origin of this family is currently in dispute. They claim to have settled at Nuceria Apulorum in the time of the Samnite Wars, but their enemies claim this gens rose from a freedman who somehow found the coin to bribe his way into Roman society.
- *Volumnia*: A gens of little political or social importance, but overburdened with coin and land.

After the infamous Ides of March, the State exterminated or exiled the following gens:

- *Brutii*: An old and legendary gens, famous for killing the last king of Rome. Once on the rise, under the patronage of Caesar himself, Marcus Junius Brutus led the infamous Senate Liberators against Caesar. He would have won if the Three Soothsayers hadn't intervened with their magic. This old house relocated to Britannia, and allied their legions with the Caledonians and a foreign Soothsayer.
- *Cassia*: An old gens with ties to politics and farming, with a solid reputation until the Ides of March.
- *Cinna*: A cadet gens from the Cornelii, who funneled a good deal of Rome's worth and wealth to field the Caledonian army.

- *Ligarius*: A haughty gens, known for their opposition to Caesar and yet still thrice-forgiven by him. After the Ides of March, it is said those who remained in Rome were fed to the lions.
- *Tillia*: A fierce and respected gens, known for insisting that all of their sons serve in the legion before entering public life.

Plebeians

Plebeians are the general body of free Roman citizens. The precise origins of the group, and the term itself, are unclear. Historian Titus Livy suggests that Ancus Marcius, one of the early kings of Rome, granted the gentes of hardworking Romans, whose blood had paved the streets of Rome, the collective *cognomen ex virtute* (name by virtue) 'Plebeians'.

Over the centuries, the Patricians came to use the term pejoratively, forcing through the Senate many punitive laws restricting Plebeian legal rights, and leveraging their monopoly on land ownership to reap many rewards. The state excluded Plebeians from magistracies and religious colleges, and did not permit them to know the laws by which they were governed. Plebeians served in the army, but rarely became military leaders. Dissatisfaction with their place in the social structure led to a *secessio plebis* (Plebeian general strike), where they withdrew from the business of Rome. Commerce shutdown and the people went hungry and rioted, murdering others in the streets.

The Caesarian reforms ended the last of the legal restrictions upon the Plebeians as a class, leaving them more or less equal to the Patricians before the law of Rome. However, other leaders granted many Patrician families special privileges that became pseudo-laws under Roman traditions. For example, the Valerii are the only family allowed to bury their dead inside of the city walls, and to fortify their doors, granting them a chance to fight invaders. Both are against the law for anyone else, but their storied family earned the right from the second King of Rome when they defended Rome from an enemy tribe.

Some Plebeian families took advantage of these reforms and transformed themselves into a new nobility amongst the Plebeians. Such rich Plebeians are called *novus homo* (a new man) or, more specifically, a self-made man.

Here's a list of common Plebeian *nomens*: Abronia, Afrania, Anneia, Arellia, Ateia, Balventia, Bantia, Bellicia, Betiliena, Caecina, Caelia, Caeparia, Caesia, Calpurnia, Calvisia, Canutia, Catia, Curtilia, Cuspia, Duilia, Durmia, Duronia, Epidia, Equitia, Erucia, Fidiculania, Flaminia, Fulvia, Fundania, Gallia, Gargonia, Gavia, Gegania, Gratidia, Hateria, Heia, Helvia, Hostilia, Insteia, Juventia, Laceria, Lamponia, Laronia, Lartia, Livia, Lollia, Lucilia, Lutatia, Magia, Maria, Memmia, Menenia, Menia, Mustia, Naevia, Nasennia, Neria, Nonia, Nymphidia, Obellia, Obultronia, Octavia, Ofania, Opetreia, Opsia, Ovidia, Paccia, Palfuria, Palpelia, Pantuleia, Papia, Papinia, Peducaea, Perpenna, Pinnia, Plaetoria, Pompilia, Pomponia, Pomptina, Porcia, Pupia, Quartia, Quartinia, Rabonia, Rabuleia, Reginia, Remmia, Rufria, Rullia, Sallustia, Salonia, Sanquinia, Saria, Scaevia, Servaeea, Sicinia, Silicia, Tarpeia, Tineia, Titia, Tullia, Ulpia, Ummidia, Viridia, and Visellia.

Liberti

The Liberti are former slaves, redeemed from their bondage to a Roman citizen via a process known as manumission. Afterwards, the liberti enjoy freedom from ownership and *libertas* (voting rights). A former slave granted this freedom is called a *libertus* (freed person) in relation to her former master, who gains the title of *patronus* (patron). A patron is obligated to his former slave, ensuring they know and obey the laws of Rome.

The state limits the rights of the Liberti and they cannot seek public office or state priesthoods, nor can they achieve Senatorial rank without Emperor intervention. However, many liberti work in the bureaucracy of Rome, ensuring the Eternal City keeps running. By law, the children of any liberti can earn the full rights of citizenship, and their grandchildren are considered Plebeians.

Slaves

The glory of Rome was built upon the blood and suffering of her slaves. The legions of Rome return after each victory with slaves taken from enemy forces, their captured families, and anyone else they could justify press-ganging into servitude. Aside from manual labor, slaves perform many domestic tasks (called body slaves), and were often quite skilled Artisans. Unskilled slaves, and those condemned to slavery as punishment, live harsh lives

working on farms, arenas, mines, and mills. Those who refuse to work were sent for redemption in the Arena.

Slaves are considered property under Roman law, and have no legal personhood and thus no rights as people. A slave can be subjected to corporal punishment, torture, and brutal execution. Attitudes are changing, however, in part because of the Caesarian economic reforms. Greatly supported by the Plebeians and freedmen, these laws made no-cost labor impossible. The Stoics, black-garbed disciplines of Cato the Black, believe in the divinity of the Republic and that slavery taints the soul. They made it quite unfashionable for citizens to keep slaves in the Eternal City, believing all people contain within their flesh the *logos*, the divine word or spark that separates a person from an animal.

Thanks to the Caesarean reforms, slaves must be paid for their work, transforming the horrific experience into an, also horrible, indentured servitude. If you play in this faction, you face major challenges and lose a good portion of your agency to the whims of fate.

Foreign Tribes and Outsiders

Rome holds some outsiders, such as the Greeks or the Alexandrians (children of Ptolemy) in high esteem, but in truth, only two classes of people matter: Roman or foreigner. Romans naturally presume that all other tribes have a social order akin to their own, and respect that order so long as outsiders understand that Rome and her citizens are always first among equals.

Rome is the cosmopolitan center of an expansive economic and martial empire. Those who seek to advance their own business interests must find inroads to the Eternal City, learn to navigate the complex and often far too confusing bureaucratic system, discover who must be bribed, and then determine the underworld gangs who need to be employed to protect their shipments. Ironically, Romans tend to respect the merchants and diplomats of foreign tribes, especially the ones who learn local laws and traditions. The Empire treats only the Caledonians of Britannica or the strange mystics known as Druids (see page xx) with suspicion, as they are feared as Brutus' spies.

Playing in this faction is a challenge. Characters of this faction are considered to have a 1-point Heart Flaw: Foreign Tribe (see **Chapter Four: Core Rules: Flaws**, page xx).

The Collegia

A *Collegium* (translation: 'joined together' or 'college') is any association or club in ancient Rome with a legal persona, similar to a corporation in the modern world. They operate as trade guilds, social clubs, burial societies, religious orders, political factions, and even gangs or underworld organizations. Collegia generally organize themselves by copying the Senate, and meeting locations are known as *curia*, after the Senate building.

Skill Adjustments

The following adjustments to the baseline skills are required to keep the tone, feel, and historical accuracy of *Mystical Rome*:

Art

Advanced arts education and training is a rarity in ancient Rome. To advance beyond the second point of this skill requires a special Quality.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Bronze Casting, Ceramics, Dancing, Drawing, Glassblowing, Metalworking, Mime (acting), Mosaics, Painting, Poetry, and Sculpting.

Convince

Speeches and oration are a necessary form of communication for every profession. Merchants, politicians, actors, and even gladiators all have forms and rules to follow when addressing a crowd.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Debate, Insult Poetry, Political Oration, Public Announcements, Religious Oration, Senatorial Debate, and Threats.

Crime

Crime is a brisk and deadly trade in this Genre. Forgery is the largest threat to law and order. Most Romans are barely literate,

and those with the skill to mimic official orders can take advantage of the unwary. Apart from forgery, second-story workers do a brisk business for their Collegium.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Arson, Breaking and Entry, Forgery, Lock-Picking, and Pick-Pocketing.

Fighting

Romans are obsessed with the fighting styles of their fallen enemies, and so their gladiators often wield strange or archaic weapons.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Axe, Contus (Lance), Gladius (Short Sword), Knife, Mariobarbuli (Weighted Darts), Pilum (Javelin), Pugio (Dagger), Spear, and Trident.

Firearms

In *Mystical Rome*, this skill relates to archery, as appropriate to the geographic region. Naturally, modern firearms remain outside the Genre.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Arcubus Ligneis (Wooden Longbow), Ballistae (Bolt Thrower), Composite Bow, and Mounted Archery.

Knowledge

Formal education is a rarity in ancient Rome, with most relying upon parental instruction or private tutors. For those with the coin to pay, private academies are available. Those wishing to learn a trade or other skills can seek out the appropriate Collegia, and apprentice themselves to a master in exchange for training. To advance beyond the second point of this skill requires a special Quality.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Accounting, Bureaucracy, Cartography, History, Law, Politics, Philosophy, Religion, Rules of Order (how the Senate and other political bodies operate, useful for a politician).

Medicine

Nowhere is education's rarity more evident than in the field of medicine. Many religions and philosophers entertain strange theories related to the four humors (developed by the Greek physician Hippocrates), and other speculations regarding the physicality of the human condition. Yet, a few actual doctors advance their art by experimentation, and learn through repeat failures how to cure the sick and perform surgery without killing the patient. To advance beyond the second point of this skill requires a special Quality.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Faith Healing, Diagnostics, Herbal Remedies, Surgery, and Valetudinarian (military triage and combat medicine).

Science

Despite the advances of the Greeks and Romans in a number of scientific fields, such as Astronomy, the scientific method hasn't yet been developed. Romans encourage learning through an appeal to authority rather than objective experimentation. To advance beyond the second point of this skill requires a special Quality. For more information, see **Reference Material: Theory and Practice of Science and Technology**, page xx.

Technology

One of Rome's significant strategic advantages is her technology. In a time of antiquity, they had heated baths, reservoirs and aqueducts, accurate maps, elevators, and strange wonders such as recreating sea battles in the Coliseum. Once they conquered a territory, the first thing the legions did was build roads and then a bathhouse. Many a barbarian people joined the Empire once they realized the benefits of hot baths and straight roads. To advance beyond the second point of this skill requires a special Quality. For more information, see **Reference Material: Theory and Practice of Science and Technology**, page xx.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Architecture, Construction, Engineering, Masonry, Plumbing, and Weaponry.

Transport

In the *Mystical Rome* genre, this skill relates to the care and riding of horses, and other beasts of burden, as appropriate to

the geographic region. It also covers other mechanized form of travel such as carts, caravans, and sailing vessels.

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*, and may modify said skill to the appropriate animal: Camel, Carts, Chariots, Donkey, Elephant, Horses, Giraffe, Rhinoceros, Ships, Wagons.

Wild Card: Magic

In *Mystical Rome*, this skill relates to the casting of spells and rituals. Magic is exceptionally rare, requiring an approved Quality granting access to this special skill. The Soothsayers Academy, spiritual investments from otherworldly creatures, and divine favor are the most common methods of learning this skill. Some rare individuals master this art via time, dedication, and sacrifice (sometimes of themselves, most often of others).

The following Professional Specializations are appropriate for *Mystical Rome*: Aruspex (reading the future via entrails), Cryptozoology, Divine Energies, Healing, Ley Lines, Magical Theory, Prophecy, Ritual Training, and School of Magic.

Human Limitations and Genre Qualities

Mystical Rome is a complex world of adventure, magic, and dark secrets that can freeze the soul. Characters with Qualities that shatter the traditional human ceiling on attributes or skills are thought to be of divine blood. All Qualities representing unusual or impossible abilities, gimmicks, or powers are considered supernatural or divine in origin. Some characters could be imbued with the horrifying powers of the gods themselves. Directors can reject any Quality that seems strange for this Genre, or if the character lacks the story justification for it.

Archetype Qualities

The following Archetype Qualities are available for purchase, for characters of the given archetype:

Artisan

Apprenticeship (1-point Quality)

You served time as an apprentice to a known and respected master of your trade, or worked several years for one of the elite Collegia of Rome. You are not bound to the *Mystical Rome* Genre limitations for the following skills: Art, Knowledge, Science, and Technology. You

possess all of the required tools of your trade, a license to operate in Rome, and a local workshop. You gain the following Qualities for free: Specialized Training (page xx) and Small Business (page xx).

Patronage (2-point Quality)

You might not be a Patrician yourself, but you have the formal patronage of one of the major Patrician families (page xx). So long as that family remains your patron, you live as though you possess the Wealthy Quality (page xx) and you gain their immunity to certain laws. Alas, this Quality cuts both ways as you are considered to be part of that Patrician family, but less important and more vulnerable, and their enemies are now your enemies.

Touched by the Muses (3-point Quality)

You have a special talent, even among your peers, and a special flair for creating and building. You can create items two levels above Mystical Rome's Tech Level. In addition, you gain a Major MacGuffin (see Chapter Five: Qualities, page xx) for free.

Barbarian

The Wilderness is Your Kingdom (1-point Quality)

You were not born in the Eternal City, but a small village or settlement from a foreign tribe. Raised on Bushcrafting; you are a master of the hunt, effortless tracking your prey, or evading those who would find you. You gain a +5 Wildcard bonus to track or hide from others in the wilderness. If you are in an area familiar to you, you can't be found. Those tracking you walk past you, so long as you stay hidden.

Survival of the Fittest (2-point Quality)

You went through a war with the Imperator and the legions of Rome. Only the strongest survive that kind of slaughter. You gain +1 Body and +1 Fighting. This bonus breaks the standard rule of not being able to stack bonuses from other Qualities.

Traveler of the World (3-point Quality)

The Romans think you are an ignorant hick, but you traveled far and wide, past the dark places on the map and visiting people never imaged. These travels made you wiser and remove the Genre limitation on Knowledge, including the possibly of learning about advanced technology from a culture that has superior Tech Levels to Rome. In addition, this Quality grants you all of the benefits of Babylon Tongue (page xx).

Bureaucrat

Eirenarchs (1-point Quality)

The Republic acknowledges you as a keeper of the peace in service to Rome, often called on to develop young candidates for future service in the militias or as future members of the Empire's bureaucracy. Cato the Black laments that Rome is rife with corrupt bureaucrats, but you are part of a new start. Acknowledged as bureaucrat in service to the Republic, you serve your *cursus honorum*. Whatever your post, you have intimate knowledge of the workings of Rome, and you know where to find her public records, purchase orders, construction plans, laws, accounts payable, and any other legal document (with the exception of wills, which are kept by the **Reference Material: Pagan Rome: Vestal Virgins**, page xx). In addition, you gain the Assistant and Talented Qualities (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx). The director can limit this Quality for story purposes.

Known Citizen of Rome (2-point Quality)

The Eternal City knows you as a venerated citizen of Rome, considered to be a living virtue and reflection of her glory. You have the ear of important people and with some work, you can make things happen in the Eternal City. You can help local magistrates get selected for "elections", get the verdicts you want in trials, and offer or deny city permits. Pre-requisite Qualities: Plebeian or Patrician. Once you achieve this Quality, it's possible to lose it due to scandal or political maneuverings.

Magistrate (3-point Quality)

Rome elected you to serve one of the lesser magistrate offices (see page xx; quaestor, curule Aedile, or censor) for the Republic (within Rome) or the Empire (serving as the assistant to a provincial governor). You have all of the rights and privileges afforded to this office, and it is the basis of a long, political career (see **Reference Material: The Body Politic: Quaestor**, page xx). Pre-requisite Qualities: Plebeian or Patrician. Once you achieve this rank, it's possible to lose it due to scandal or political maneuverings.

Clergy

Initiate (1-point Quality)

One of the official religious orders, recognized by the Empire, formally inducted you. As a result, you are not bound to any limitations from this Genre regarding the following skills: Knowledge and Medicine. You can purchase any metahuman Quality as being divinely inspired. You have all of the rights and privileges afforded to this office, and it's considered the basis of a long, religious career (see **Reference Material: Pagan Rome**, page xx). Once you achieve this rank, it's possible to lose it due to scandal or political maneuverings.

Sacrificium (2-point Quality)

You are officially recognized as a ritual master, able to perform rites of appeasement including sacrifice. By performing *expiations* (appeasing or seeking favor of a deity) or *piaculum* (seeking forgiveness from a deity), you can influence the attitudes of the Soothsayers and other Clergy toward specific actions or events. In addition, you can run one of the larger city festivals and rites such as Lupercalia. If you possess a Quality that grants you magic, or work in concert with someone that does possess said Quality, you can leverage the energy of the rite to lower the difficulty of the spell casting (see page xx).

Holy Cantrips (3-point Quality)

Through divine inspiration, or uncovered secret fragments of the Sibylline Books, you somehow managed to learn the Wild Card Skill: Magic, and gained

the Quality: Magic Dabbler (see **Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx). This isn't *strictly* illegal, but those who possess magic outside of the auspices of the Soothsayers tend to be horribly murdered while the Senate looks the other way. For more information, see **Origins of Magic: Divine Magic**, page xx.

Criminal

Made (1-point Quality)

You belong, body and soul, to one of the underworld's state-approved collegia, chosen to bear its mark upon your flesh. Only the strongest gangs gain acknowledgement by the state as a formal Collegia. Joining such a collegia takes cunning, strength, and the ability to apply cruelty judiciously. You freely walk the criminal underworld, can hide in any known safehouse, and, if arrested, you are immune to prosecution from all lesser crimes that are not against the state or disruptive to the flow of trade. You gain the following Qualities: Calling Card (page xx), and Connected (see page xx).

Noxii (2-point Quality)

You were sentenced and survived the deplorable conditions of the arena and the blood pits as penance for the crimes against Rome. Despite the lack of training or protection, you survived and made a name for yourself fighting trained Gladiators and even the beasts of the wilds. Children pretend to be you, and mimes perform recreations of your last battles. You gain two of the following qualities for free: Minor MacGuffin (page xx), No Fear (page xx), Stone Cold Killer (page xx), and Street Cred (page xx).

Honor Among Thieves (3-point Quality)

Your name is spoken only in fear and hushed voices, even in the halls of the Senate. Despite your disreputable trade, others think you are a person of worth and honor. Legitimate tradesmen, politicians, and even elite Patricians seek you out to protect their interests in your territory. You walk a very fine line, existing in a brutal world where mercy is often a sign of weakness. The community treats you as honored

citizen, merchants will seek your advice, and local criminal give you a cut of their ill-gotten goods as an honorarium.

Druid

Scholar (1-point Quality)

In your role as wandering prophet, you serve as mentor, teacher, historian, and traveling scientist. You gain all of the benefits of the Quality: Scholar (page xx), but instead of being revered by the Roman people and the senate, it's the tribes you visit and serve.

Blessing of the Green (2-point Quality)

You know the art of tracking the stars, charting their destiny and yours. You live in balance with the world of men and that of the Green and her servants. You can sense when the world is wrong. The moment Caesar survived, you know something sacred was broken, yet you can't wonder if the world's not better for magic's return and the rejuvenation of the strength of the Green. If someone acts in such a way that time and reality change, you feel it.

Druidic Magic (3-point Quality)

Through tutelage from another in the Druidic Order, you learned the Wild Card Skill: Magic and gained the Quality: Magic Dabbler (see **Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx). This knowledge is steeped in tribal iconography and clearly Druidic when observed by anyone with familiarity with magic. Displaying this knowledge is a crime in Rome as the Druidic religion is deemed forbidden. For more information, see **Origins of Magic: Druidic Magic**, page xx.

Gladiator

Apprenticeship (1-point Quality)

You served time as an apprentice to a known and respected Ludus Magnus (gladiator schools) of Rome. You gain the following Qualities: Calling Card (page xx), Specialized Training (page xx), and Special Attack (page xx).

Brotherhood (2-point Quality)

You are a member of an elite brotherhood: a gladiator of Rome. You trained in the ludus and shed your blood in the sands. You gain +1 Body and +1 Fighting. This bonus breaks the standard rule of not being able to stack bonuses from other Qualities.

God of the Arena (3-point Quality)

Infamous for your bouts in the arena, Rome considers you to be in line for future godhood. Wealthy Patricians (men and women both) pay gold for your sweat (and occasionally other, more private services). Your patrons adore you, granting you celebrity status, and shower you with presents. Your fame attracts the attention of the Clergy, who often perform *expiations* in your honor. You possess the best equipment and weapons. You gain the Quality: Major McGuffin (page xx), which must be applied to your armor or weaponry in the arena.

Merchant

Open for Business (1-point Quality)

You scraped enough coin and contacts together for a solid business and people know you as a fair merchant. You possess enough income for the Roman version of My So-Called Average Life (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx) and Small Business (page xx). In addition, you can choose from one of the following Qualities: Needful Things (page xx) or Resourceful (page xx). You aren't rich, but have just enough coin to be known as an up-and-comer.

Shipping and Exports (2-point Quality)

You have many contacts in shipping. You know how to get your goods to where they need to go, which pirates to bribe, and what sailors are both honest and discreet. With a little coin and some discussions, you can ensure that a package (be it a group of passengers or cargo) arrives on-time and without any hassles.

Prosperity (3-point Quality)

Business goes well. Prosperity is your mistress. You are a god among mere mortals. You gain the Quality: Midas Touch (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx).

Legionnaire

Training Package: Legionnaire (1-point Quality)

The legion put special time and energy in your training. You can select one of the following Qualities for free: Specialized Training (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx) or Special Attack (page xx). In addition, you gain a Trivial MacGuffin in the form of a weapon of advanced Quality from your legion (see **Chapter Five: Qualities**, page xx) for free.

Veteran (2-point Quality)

You are a veteran soldier in one of the mighty legions of Rome. You marched and fought your way across the known world. As you already earned your salt in previous campaigns, others treat you as a revered veteran. The legion stores always repair and replace your equipment at no cost. Logistics gives you the easiest assignments and when you need to adventure away from the legion to earn a little coin or take care of personal business, your commanders grant you special dispensation so long as there isn't a battle imminent. Such soldiers are often given permission to marry, own businesses within Rome, and have a life.

Immunes (3-point Quality)

You trained at one of the elite Collegia as an artisan before joining the legion. You march and fight with the legions, as any other soldier, but then lead your fellow soldiers as an artisan, helping to build roads, construct bathhouses, and otherwise bring civilization to the wilds. This special status means Rome affords you special privileges: exemptions from guard duty and flexible hours. You are not bound to Genre limitations for the following skills: Art and Technology. In addition, you can select one of the following Qualities for free: Specialized Training (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx) or Talented (**Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx).

Soothsayer

Soothsayer Academy (1-point Quality)

Through rigorous study and training under the Three Soothsayers at the Academy, you learned the Wild Card Skill: Magic, and gain the Quality: Cantrips (see **Chapter Five: Cinematic Qualities**, page xx). Further, they certified you to perform magic and read the future for citizens of Rome. You can purchase any metahuman Quality and justify it as magically based. For more information, see **Origins of Magic: Soothsayer Magic**, page xx.

Magister (2-point Quality)

You graduated from the Soothsayer Academy, and are privileged enough to teach the next generation of students. You have a loyal research assistant (Quality: Sidekick, page xx), access to academy resources to continue your private studies, and immunity to legal prosecution for all minor offenses within the city of Rome. **See Reference Material: The Body Politic: Soothsayer Academy**, page xx.

Blessed by the Three (3-point Quality)

The sacred Three Soothsayers have a special interest in you. They trained you well, and as a departing gift upon graduation they gave you either an Avatar (page xx) or a Major McGuffin (page XX).

General Qualities

The following Qualities are available for purchase by any character:

Literacy (1-point Quality)

You might not be a scholar, but you managed to either bribe a tutor or teach yourself how to read, write, and even keep simple figures. You can read and write Latin, and must take this Quality again for other languages.

Classical Education (2-point Quality)

You had the standard Roman education in the classics via family instruction, tutors, and even some higher education. You studied literature, Roman law, history and tradition. You

might even specialize in studies of rhetoric, philosophy, natural philosophy (metaphysics, mathematics, medicine, and natural sciences), and astronomy. This Quality automatically grants you the Quality: Literacy of one language, and it allows you to break Genre limitations for the following Skills: Art, Knowledge, Medicine, Science, and Technology.

Divine Lineage (2-point Quality)

Divinity is in your blood. You can trace your lineage back to a storied hero of Rome and a god. For the purpose of this Quality, the claim may be true or false. It only matters if others believe it. Others see you as more than a mere mortal, superior to your peers, and amazing in some way. Gaia Julius Caesar claims to be descended from the goddess Venus through Aeneas. This allows him to inspire his troops to victory when the odds are against him. You have a +5 wildcard bonus to any Heart or Soul action pools against those that know of your claim and believe in it. You can help rally forces, booster their resolve, and enrage them right before battle.

Minor Patrician Family (2-point Quality)

You were born to a proud Patrician family, with strong ties to the history and glory of Rome. Select a name from the faction list or create your own (see: **Faction: Minor Patrician**, page xx). Your family has one thing they are good at, be that art, commerce, politics, or something else, and have a challenge to overcome. You likely give patronage to several other Plebeian families, and are the client of a more powerful Gentes Maiores. You have great and exceptional rights and privileges (see Faction: Patricians, page xx). You gain one of the following qualities; Classical Education (page xx), Divine Lineage (page xx), Family Trust (page xx), or Storied Cognomen (page xx).

Plebeian (2-point Quality)

You were born to a proud Plebeian family, with strong ties to the history and glory of Rome. Select a name from the faction list or create your own (see: **Faction: Plebeian**, page xx). Your family has one thing they are good at, be that art, commerce, politics, or something else and have a challenge to overcome. As a Plebeian, you are a client to a more powerful Patrician family.

Storied Cognomen (2-point Quality)

You earned a cognomen from a great deed you performed, or you were blessed with a brilliant family cognomen, and others recognize you as the heir apparent within your family. Prophecies often mention such names. Rome expects great deeds of one bearing a cognomen. For instance, Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus conquered Africa for Rome, and thereafter it is said that only an army led by a Scipio could achieve victory there. This name and its meaning are taken as accepted fact and the will of the gods themselves, even if there's proof otherwise. Many believe it impossible for Rome to win a war in Africa unless there is a Cornelius Scipio in Rome's leadership organizing the effort.

Legacy Writ of Exception (3-point Quality)

Roman law presumes that all her edicts and degrees are divine and forever until countermanded. No matter how nonsensical it might be, you possess a Writ of Exception from the Senate of Rome, or perhaps even from the Time of Kings. You could be the only one allowed to bake and sell bread within a small neighborhood of a region, or the only moneychanger allowed to work at a prime location in the forum. You might be the only allowed supplier of bricks for imperial projects within a region. The Valerii have three Writ of Exceptions that are so old that even the famous historian Livy can't identify where they came from. The Valerii possess a number of these, allowing them to bury their dead in the city itself, to possess a door in their villa that opens out and blocks the street, and the highest seat of honor at the City Maximus.

Major Patrician Family (3-point Quality)

You were born to a proud Patrician family, with strong ties to the history and glory of Rome. Select a name from the faction list or create your own (see: Faction: Minor Patrician, page xx). Your family has one thing they are good at, be that art, commerce, politics, or something else and have a challenge to overcome. You likely give patronage to several other Plebeian families, and are the client of a more powerful Gentes Maiores. You have great and exceptional rights and privileges (see **Faction: Patricians**, page xx). You can purchase one family Quality at half-cost rounded up (see **Patrician Gentes Maiores**, page xx) and gain one of the following qualities;

Classical Education (page xx), Divine Lineage (page xx), Family Trust (page xx), or Storied Cognomen (page xx).

Scholar (3-point Quality)

Rome considers you a scholar. You gain all of the benefits of Classical Education (page xx), and 5 points to spend on the following skills: Art, Knowledge, Medicine, Science, and Technology. You are one of the leading experts in your field. Senate reports quote you, and often lesser students accept your theories as fact.

Public Works (5-point Quality)

Rome has a unique perspective on citizenship and wealth. The state expects those with the most wealth to contribute the greater good of society. You leveraged your wealth and political ties to build an impressive public work on city property open to the public. It could be an urban park near one of the slums inside of the city, a public bathhouse, or even a new aqueduct that makes the lives of the mob easier or happier. The important thing is that your name is on these projects and the people love you for it. When you speak, the people listen and believe your intentions to be honest and true. You gain a +5 Wildcard bonus when attempting to sway the people.

Victory Laurels (5-point Quality)

You won a sizable victory in the name of Rome on the battlefields and returned home to receive a formal accommodation from your general, an elevation of social class via vote of the Senate, or even a formal triumph in your name. The victory is in the past, but it will never be forgotten. A statue bearing your name and likeness was added to the Hall of Heroes in the Senate Curio building. This distinction adds to your and others, without such laurels in their past, can't question or naysay your knowledge of military tactics or loyalty to Rome without the full support of the Senate. The Legions know of your victory and you gain a +5 Wildcard bonus to command and organize those under your command.

Mythic Ancestry (6-point Quality)

You are more than a mere human—a monster of divine origin that once was considered to be mythological. You could be descended from the legendary gorgon Medusa, be part Satyr,

or one of children of Polyphone. Important Romans find it quite fashionable to claim divinity from the gods, but it's quite another to show evidence of being a monster. Monsters are creatures that gladiators kill for sport or heroes destroy to protect the common people. Society believes it quite scandalous for a Patrician House to claim one as a member. Many professions (especially bureaucrats, legionnaires, and soothsayers) reject you. Some find shelter with the artisans, clergy, and criminals. The only major Patrician family known to accept such creatures as part of their blood is the Claudii. You gain the Quality: Battle Form (page xx) with the two of the following qualities attached to it: Camouflage (page xx), Natural Weapon (page xx), Shape Changer (page xx), or Wild Talent (page xx).

Story Bible

The universe of *Mystical Rome* is a rich, complex setting merging legend, mythology, and history. This story bible is divided into different sections which provide shade and color to Rome's beautiful mosaic.

Writers and Directors are free to incorporate any and all of this material, or none at all, as suits their particular production.

Likewise, we include several reference primers to detail the historical world of *Mystical Rome*. To quote Bruce Lee, the great writer, actor, and film director, "Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless, and add what is specifically your own."

Story Overview

Beware the Ides of March! Caesar failed to take heed of the Three Soothsayers' warning, but faithful Marc Antony did not and paid the ultimate price for his loyalty, forever altering the destiny of the Eternal City. Twenty years later, Caesar still reigns over the unified Roman Empire, which includes the Republic of Rome, the Egyptian Empire, and the Europa Provinces. The oracles who saved him now operate a notorious academy of sorcery, where they instruct the sons and daughters of the elite in the eldritch arts.

Writer's Room Commentary: Prime Soothsayers

All graduates of the academy by decree of the Senate gain the title Soothsayer. The term Prime Soothsayer refers to the nearly immortal creatures that have lived since the drowning of Atlantis. The known Prime Soothsayers include the Three Soothsayers of Rome, the Morrigan (three sisters in Britannia), an unnamed Soothsayer in Parthia, and one who lives across the ocean in place where there are stone pyramids that allegedly flow

with blood. More might be hidden in the world. None of the Prime Soothsayers are exactly free with their knowledge.

The only obstacles preventing Rome's domination of the known world are the barbarous Caledonians led by the traitor Marcus Junius Brutus, who also commands the remains of the so-called Senate Liberators and three lost legions of Rome. Apart from the traitor prince, the seemingly invincible Parthian Empire threatens Roman power in the Mediterranean. One of the few true prophecies remembered from the Libri Sibylline (a book of prophecy destroyed by the Soothsayers) claims that Rome will never win against the Parthians until united by a single king. Some whisper this was the real reason Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus led the revolt that killed Antony. If they know the truth of the matter, the Three Soothsayers have not shared it. Even the mighty Imperator, Caesar, fears to move against Parthia, lest the mob rise up against him as a tyrant, and give Brutus an opening to return to Rome.

Yet Caesar grows old, and not even the Soothsayers can extend his life for much longer. The few remaining Patrician Majores smell blood, and want to expand their power after the Caesarian reforms. Caesar's heir, Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy, seems content to rule over Alexandria as Consul with his wife, Arsinoe the Astronomer, sister of infamous Cleopatra. The Pax Romana over the Mediterranean Sea is shattered by a new breed of pirates intent on slowing the shipments of grain from Egypt to Rome, leaving the common people hungry and dangerously angry.

The War of Infinite Regress: Soothsayer's Conflict

How do those who can observe and alter time war against each other? What happens when different sides view the infinite possibilities of the universe, and regress back again and again to try a different tactic? The Three Soothsayers refer to this fractal conflict as the War of Infinite Regress.

Two thousand years ago, before the Trojan War and before known civilization, there was only shining Atlantis. Her people conquered the elements, and commanded time and space with the power of their magic. The world was theirs, as nothing that walked the land or swam in the sea could ever hope to match their strength.

Then, a dread terror from outside, the evil from another world, broke the floating city. It struck beautiful Atlantis down with a meteor from the sky, scattering her people across the continents. Those who survived were strong with magic, and had the ability to communicate through their dreams, ignoring the laws of time and space. They knew it was their magic, their threat to the otherworldly creatures, that drew them to this world.

Earthly magic could never challenge these eldritch horrors, but left to their own devices, humanity could grow strong enough to challenge the darkness. So, the magicians agreed to shut the door and lock away magic forever and kill both monsters and myths to save humanity. That is, until the Three Soothsayers stepped in and saved the life of the Emperor, opening the door to magic, myth, and monsters once again.

The leaders of the opposing faction are the Caledonian Soothsayers, (three triplet sisters) who claim to be the eldest soothsayers in existence. If they do oppose Rome, and her Soothsayers, then why are they waiting? What will they do? Why do they empower the Druids?

The Druids have the ability to sense when balance of the universe is disrupted and when time is changed. A natural enemy of the Soothsayers, to be certain, but there's a symmetry to all that has come. Is that why the others wait?

The Divergence of the Soothsayer Timeline: The Ides of March

The beginning of Rome is steeped in myth and legend. Centuries of propaganda ensured that history was indeed written by the victors. Furthermore, the Three Soothsayers subtly altered the history of Rome from the beginning. Some believe it's entirely possible that the origins, the history, and even the mythology of the world remains in constant flux.

On the Ides of March, when the Senate Liberators prepared to assassinate Gaius Julius Caesar on the floor of the Senate Curia, the Three Soothsayers intervened. Once, in world long forgotten, they merely warned Caesar and left him to his own devices. This time, they offered Marc Antony a choice: save his friend at the cost of his own life.

They could not change the world by themselves, but required a soul with free will to choose. When the Senate Liberators struck at Caesar in the Senate Curia, in this world, Antony was there to deflect the first blow. The Three Soothsayers then appeared as though they were Dis Pater, and struck down the traitors with fires from the Underworld. Only a scant few of them survived the slaughter.

Somehow, through some strange but equally powerful magic, Brutus survived the eldritch assault. Some say he accepted an investment from the world beyond. Others claim the Caledonian Soothsayers, the Morrigan, wielded her own might from across the world.

The flames and the chaos of the failed assassination attempt allowed Brutus (and a few of his cohorts) to survive and escape the city. The Three Soothsayers could have stopped him, but instead chose to infiltrate the Curia further, venturing into a hidden chamber where the Senate Liberators secretly took the Sibylline Books.

The Sibylline Books

The Sibylline Books were a collection of oracular prophecies written in Greek hexameters. Legend has it they were purchased from a sibyl (secretly a Soothsayer) by the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus. These sacred books were consulted in secret at many momentous crises through the history of the Republic.

The secrets the Soothsayers gleaned from the Sibylline Books changed their behavior, and they decided to form their Academy. Magic returned to the world, but at a cost. Monsters and beasts of legend also returned to harrow humanity. Some say that it was only beginning and the real threat of the War of Infinite Regress hasn't yet begun. The door, once closed, now hangs wide open.

Alexandria: The Eye of the Storm

Rome suffers from a shortage of grain. The city swells in size and power, but such growth requires resources. The Cornelii feed the Eternal City, and bill the Imperial treasury at substantial discount, paying off their debts to the Emperor. The adopted son of the Emperor, Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy Alexandria, holds Egypt and gives his sacred oath that his grain shipments are leaving Egypt unmolested. If piracy continues, though, the mob could riot. This is the foundation of the Mystical Rome introduction script - Casus belli, page xx.

The Soothsayers extended Caesar's life, but even they can't halt the advances of time. Whispers among the Patricians state Caesar's son married an Egyptian, and now worships cats and dogs in the manner of her people. Politics is rarely kind with old dictators, who seek immortality through their deeds. Split in loyalty, the major Patrician families seek to improve their position and status in the Republic.

Rivals Parthia and Egypt raided each other borders, their mutual hatreds fueling wars for many centuries. While the Soothsayer of Alexandria slumbered beneath the ancient Pyramids, Parthia advanced and sought to claim the fertile lands of the Nile. Co-Consul Octavius invited a cadet family of the Valerii, led by Soothsayer Nicomedes Valerius Corvus and Centurian Commodus Valerius Perseus, to the tomb of the Sleeping Soothsayer. No one knows what they discovered there, only that the Soothsayer died and her blood was used in a ritual. Nicomedes returned with a burnt, skeletal arm.

Four legions from Parthia picked that moment to attack. They quickly took Cairo with men, magic, and monsters that living memory had not seen in sunlight. They advanced upon Alexandria, but were narrowly defeated thanks to the intervention of the Seventh Legion of Rome, a clever plan, and the lifeblood of a Prime Soothsayer. Did the Valerii learn the art of changing the past for the future? Something happened to the timeline on the level of saving Caesar, this much the Druids claim is certain.

The invaders were repelled, but what now? Will they return? Will Rome go to war and lose according to prophecy, unless they have a king?

The Brutus Stratagem

Brutus took three legions to Britannia nearly twenty years ago, and then worked to turn a collection of warring tribes into a force that could restore the Republic. Rumor has it they have their own Celtic Soothsayers named Morrigan and a hero of the Germanic tribes, a young lord named Armin. They build up their forces, and prepare to cross the Atlantic to invade Gaul. While the Empire is strong, it has weak points that can be leveraged, especially when the planners of the operation can see the future.

Yet, Brutus is cautious. He learned the horrors of facing the Soothsayers head on, and so he seeks allies in Rome. Unfortunately, his main allies, the Cornelii, were severely punished by the Emperor. Their wealth drained, their manpowered is now devoted to feeding the entire city of Rome lest they all be executed.

The Aemilii quietly offered their aid, but while they are the richest family in Rome, they are led by a known criminal, Livius Aemilius Broccha. Brutus considers his honor his greatest shield and will not enter an alliance with them unless the Cornelii vouch for them. He grows concerned that both the Claudii and the Valerii chose to remain loyal, each of them an ancient house of Rome.

His plan is simple. His logic sound. A drowning man can't fight a war. He sends envoys to see who will invite him to return to Rome, to find out if Rome is ready to once again be the Republic she was, and to kill the rot of tyranny and corruption.

The Return of Magic

Magic returned and brought monsters with her. Clerics once again perform miracles in the streets. Soothsayers stay in the shadows skulking about, concerned with a future the common person can't imagine. Druids wait at the edges of civilization, teaching and praying the citizens of Rome will turn away from a future that will doom them all. Some say magic is a living entity, a river of invisible energy, and a force from the gods themselves.

A new generation of Soothsayers, trained at the Academy, begins to filter into society. How will the presence of magic affect the average person? Would it drive them mad to have such power? What is this War of Infinite Regress whispered in the halls of the academy?

Historical Change Log

The Mystical Rome Genre is an alternative history based on a single deviation occurring on March 15th, 44 BCE. In the real world, Gaius Julius Caesar, and his close associate Mark Antony, participated in the monthly festival sacred to Jupiter. The Flamen Dialis, Jupiter's high priest, led the sacrificial sheep in procession along the Via Sacra to the Arx Capitolina. They walked along, drinking and laughing, greeting the mob and conducting

business. The Three Soothsayers stopped Caesar with the infamous cry, "Beware the Ides of March."

Caesar and Antony laughed off the warning and continued their walk to destiny. Mark Antony left Caesar for a time, distracted with business as tribune. Fatefully, Caesar walked into the ambush on the Senate floor and the rest is legend.

In Mystical Rome, the Three Soothsayers used their abilities to change the timeline and ensured that Caesar lived, and certain events turned to their advantage. This is a list of all of the changes that occurred as a result of the Soothsayers.

- March 16th, 44 BCE: The Senate Liberators attempted to assassinate Gaius Julius Caesar on the Senate floor, just as before. However, in this reality, Mark Antony refused to be distracted and instead fought them just long enough for some Lictors to enter the fight. Caesar and Anthony were both mortally wounded. The Three Soothsayers make an appearance once again, driving off the remaining Senate Liberators. They offered to save one of the dying men's lives, at the cost of the other. Anthony surrendered his lifeforce to save Caesar.
- Gaius Cassius Longinus and Marcus Junius Brutus escaped Rome, but make one last attempt to kill Caesar. Instead, they found Queen Cleopatra and her child (and Caesar's potential heir) Caesarion. They butchered them. Cleopatra's sister, noted astronomer and scholar, Arsinoë IV, survived and was sequestered with Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy. Later, the brutality of Brutus turned Egypt against the rebels and led to Egypt joining into the Empire.
- While Caesar rallied the city's defenses, the Three Soothsayers raided the inner sanctum of the Senate building for the Sibylline Books (see Reference Material: Soothsayer Academy: Sibylline Books, page xx). Why they stole this material was a mystery, even to their later students. The Caledonians and Parthian Empire sought out any remnants of these prophecies to learn why. Was this the reason for the War of Infinite Regress?
- Monsters and magic violently entered the world, like lightning on a calm day right before the deluge. Faithful priests learned their rituals now manifested as divine magic. Citizens in the provinces claimed mystical beasts harassed trade and some of their flock. The Soothsayers claimed it was side-effect from saving the Emperor and the old mystical energies flushing back into the world's ecosystem.
- Caesar anointed his adopted son, Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy, Co-Consul of Rome and left behind a legion, that became the Praetorian Guard, to defend the city. Despite pressure to marry, Octavius

remained single, seeming to prefer the logically-minded astronomer, Arsinoë IV. He issued dozens of reforms for Rome, commissioned Virgil to write the Aeneid, and reorganized the city into fourteen regions.

- December 21th, 44 BCE: Gaius Cassius Longinus and Marcus Junius Brutus escaped Italy with two legions. While travelling to Britannia, they went through Gaul where they forged an alliance with the Caledonian Tribes, and the three ancient Soothsayers that lived among them, known as the Mór-Ríoghain (or the Morrigan).
- December, 44 BCE and 40 BCE: The Four-Year War in Gaul, between the united legions of Brutus and Rome, tore savagely along the coast of Gaul. The Emperor of Rome personally led the war, containing the forces of Brutus to Britannia, but the Mór-Ríoghain created terrible storms, making it impossible to cross the black waters without sinking.
- While the Emperor was out of Rome to secure the Empire, Octavius ensured any who might oppose his father's leadership were quietly eliminated, even those who reached special accommodations or agreements with him.
- Some in league with the Senate Liberators remained behind and confessed their sins, begging for forgiveness. Those who bended the knee received a pardon from the Emperor. Someone revealed the Corneliis leveraged their resources to hide them from the wraith of the Emperor. While Caesar did in time forgive them, he exacted a harsh financial penalty upon them and forbade them from participating in major rites in Rome. This caused a minor break between the Emperor and his heir, as Caesar preferred to offer mercy, whereas Octavius wanted stability and grew a taste for the blood of others.
- The Soothsayers claimed the Tiber region of Rome. There, they built an Academy for new soothsayers while they personally took residence in the Lupercal Cave under the newly constructed House of the Julia.
- April 25th, 39 BCE: Octavius reorganized Rome into 14 regions and put forth the motion to the Senate. The Augurs and Quindecemviri (see Reference Material: Pagan Rome, page xx) attempted to veto the process. Gnaeus Corneliis Servius, of the Augurs, attempted to use their auctoritas of ius augurum, or religious privilege, to stop the Senate. In response, the Three Soothsayers transformed his entrails into a cobra. He died painfully, wailing on the senate steps. This led to the Soothsayer Massacre where the Three Soothsayers unleashed the full force of their magic in public, burning down part of the Cybele Temple. For a full hour, they turned day into night above the Eternal City with their eldritch flames. They massacred both the Augurs and Quindecemviri.
- May 2th, 39 BCE: The Emperor personally approved of the marriage between Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy and Arsinoë IV due to a prophecy of the Three Soothsayers. A sole Senator protested, insulting

the Julia and their divine claim to Venus. His name was no longer spoken, his family casted out of Rome, and his severed head hung before the door of the House of Julia.

- September 2th, 39 BCE: Octavius and Arsinoë IV moved to Alexandria to rule there while the Emperor settled in Rome. The Emperor and his heir united the Empire, from end to end. Rumors abound that the Emperor feared his son too brutal for the Eternal City, believing him better off in a less civilized land.
- May 16th, 30 BCE: Grain shipments from Alexandria and across the Empire were no longer safe from pirates, or they simply disappeared. This increased the burden upon the Corneli. While powerful, many of the other major Patrician Houses shunned them from their parties and events to favor the Emperor.
- May 16th, 22 BCE: A cohort from a cadet branch of the Valerii raided a temple near Alexandria. Sources claimed they visited the underworld and took the power of a primary Soothsayer. The mythic Sleeping Soothsayer was slain.
- July 22th, 22 BCE: Three legions of the Parthia Empire invaded the outer regions of Alexandria, but were deterred by the surprise intervention of two Legions of Rome, led by a Magister of the Soothsayer Academy and his Centurion brother. Witnesses claimed it was as though they knew the future and ordered their formations accordingly. Octavius claimed victory and requested a Triumph from the Senate. The state granted it for three days after the Festival of Anthony.
- September 11th, 22 BCE: The Festival of Anthony, held in the Fields of Mars outside of the city, was held as a celebration of brotherhood, wine, and song in the name of a hero of Rome. Traditionally, the state barred disgraced families from attending, but the Aemilli publicly welcomed them and announced it in the Senate. The Emperor chose not to veto it.
- Now: A Triumph comes. Rome faces an inevitable war with the Parthian Empire as long as they have no king. Brutus waits in Britannia.

Reference Material: Theory and Practice of Magic

This section defines how the modifications to the magic system used for the Genre: Mystical Rome. For more information about the template and how magic operates, see **Chapter Five: Qualities: Theory and Practice of Magic**, page xx.

Mastery of Magic

Three Qualities grant a character the ability to wield and practice magic. Some archetypes, such as Soothsayer, can offer a discount of these qualities.

- Mystical Dabbler (page xx)
- Sorcerer (page xx)
- Master of Mystic Arts (page xx)

The Origin of Magic

The world was once rich with magic; gods and monsters roamed freely, and the first sorcerers banded together in fabled Atlantis. There, a powerful cabal consolidated their power, explored the universe, and tamed the physical world. Atlantis transformed into gleaming towers of obsidian and glass. Then, they discovered something horrible that terrified them so much they placed a universal capstone on the flood of mystical energy flowing in their world. In that time, gods and monsters became myth, their city sank into the oceans, and the civilization of man rose.

By wiping away magic, the world was safe from the terrors beyond. However, three of the last Atlanteans and Soothsayers, changed the future. They saved Caesar and cracked open the capstone, starting the War of Infinite Regress between the scattered survivors of Atlantis (For more information, see **Reference Material: Soothsayer Academy: Philosophy of the Soothsayers**, page xx.).

Divine Magic

The Clergy wield “divine” magic, powered by their faith in the gods and the dogma of their religions. Clergy find it easier to cast magic in the comfort of their temples, through known rituals and schools that favor their god. For example, a cleric of Pluto could gain a Wildcard bonus (as describe on the chart on **Chapter Five: Qualities: Casting Magic**, page xx) when casting a spell during a funeral rite, and calling upon the Necromancy school of magic. If the Director determines the cleric is casting magic unapproved by their god, she might exact a penalty or allow it to succeed with a warning Consequence.

Druidic Magic

Druidic magic concerns the balance of the world and protection of the Green—the collective lifeforce and manifestation of the wilderness. Druids find it easier to cast magic in the wilderness,

untainted by humanity and civilization. Their power fades in the urban environment. Directors award or penalize Wildcard points depending upon the Druids location as per the chart on **Chapter Five: Qualities: Casting Magic**, page xx.

Soothsayer Magic

While the other spellcasters rely upon faith and passion, the Soothsayers depend upon skill, mathematical precision, and natural law. Directors award or penalize Wildcard points as per the chart on **Chapter Five: Qualities: Casting Magic**, page xx.

Magic Ecosystem: Base Difficulty Rating

Medium Magic: This Genre has a wealth of mystical energy in this Genre, but it takes training and discipline to tap into it. Think of the magical world and mundane as separated by a barrier with travel between them taking effort.

- Base Difficulty Rating for magic that falls within your schools of magic: 10
- Base Difficulty Rating for magic that falls outside your schools of magic: 15

Laws of Magic

Mystical Rome defaults to all of the laws of magic as found in **Chapter Five: Qualities Laws of Magic**, page xx.

Available Schools of Magic

Mystical Rome defaults to all of the schools of magic as found in **Chapter Five: Qualities: Schools of Magic**, page xx.

Reference Material: Theory and Practice of Science & Technology

Here’s a brief overview of the science and technology available in Mystical Rome. The return of magic may stilt some development and enhance other areas in the future, but for now the changes have been minimal to the prime timeline.

Category	Tech Level	Description	Accessibility
Communication	4	Writing and the materials to do so with have not changed much but have become more common. Paper and vellum are now the	Common

		method of choice for recording and communication. Entire monasteries are devoted to the creation of books.	
Medicine	3	The Hippocratic Corpus becomes available, a collection of 60 Greek texts which formed the basis of medical knowledge. Humorism (the idea that the body's health is determined on the balance of the four humors) is conceived.	Common
Computing	4	The first clocks (water and mechanical) are developed, though still rare. Modern algebra is developed though not widely taught.	Uncommon
Agriculture	4	Crops are no longer grown only for subsistence, but also for trade and export. Multiple types of livestock are domesticated, leading to the decline of hunting. Fermentation is developed as a means of preservation and sanitation, leading to leavened bread and the all-important BEER.	Uncommon
Military	3	The legions of Rome were the envy of the world. Their shields and short weapons were designed for fighting in tightly packed ranks, and the introduction of ballistae and catapults provided fire support across the battlefield. Naval warfare becomes much more common.	Uncommon
Construction	5	Water mills are now common, and windmills are being used where water mills are not practical. Many Roman techniques are	Uncommon

		rediscovered, including domes, clear glass, and plumbing. Skilled laborers band together, forming guilds to develop standards and fix pricing for specific work.	
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Technology Reference

These sections contain additional details about the technology and science of Mystical Rome.

Roman Communication Reference

With technological innovations allowing Roman citizens to build population centers over greater distances without placing them by a direct water source, the need to spread the word of the Empire grew.

To that end, Annalists wrote down the events of the Empire, from the mundane to the historical. Proclamations from the Emperor shared page space alongside a note about the specific writer's dinner from the same day.

Alongside the Annals, and later replacing them entirely, was the development of the Acta Diurna (or Daily Acts). Written on stone or metal and posted in areas with high traffic, the Acta served as a means to provide notice of official and authorized events of note to the citizens of Rome. From there, a scribe might follow the ending line of "publicare et propagare" ("make public and propagate") by making a copy of the Acta and sending them to the various provincial governors. In this way, announcements from the capital spread to the entire Empire.

While many in the Empire popularly used wax tablets, they gradually give way to folded parchment notebooks called pugillares membranei, and bound books called codices. These not only saved space by replacing scrolls, but were also described as more comfortable to use.

Roman Medicine Reference

With millions of citizens across the world, ancient Roman physicians knew a wide array of medical procedures, ranging from the holistic and supernatural methods to advanced surgical

techniques taken in part from the Greeks. Although knowledge from the Greeks helped Roman physicians in making great strides in the field, many Romans continued to cling to religion-based medical beliefs. Those preferring more active methods of managing their health faced both scorn and suspicion from others who believed modern medicine was dangerous. Highly-educated patrician families left their health in the hands of experienced physicians, while less affluent plebian families sought treatment from street doctors, who peddled more quackery than medicine.

The majority of Romans believed a healthy mind equaled a healthy body, and they spent a great deal of effort and money on staying fit. Even those who believed illness came from angering the gods worked diligently to maintain their health, as well as improving the public health system of the Empire. Many agreed that bad water and sewage contributed to illness.

Romans frequently sacrificed animals at temples dedicated to Asclepius — a Greek god of medicine and healing — in hopes of relief from an ailment. Once an animal was sacrificed, a priest would examine the liver and other internal organs to diagnose illness in the patient. Known as Asclepieions, these temples contained baths, gardens, and other facilities intended to promote good health. Even as medicine continued to progress in the Roman Empire, these temples thrived. Where modern medicine failed, the Asclepieions offered comfort to cases beyond saving.

In the early years of the Roman Empire, the paterfamilias was responsible for healing any illness within his household. Over time, as Romans captured Greek doctors as prisoners of war, organized medicine came to the Roman Empire. As physicians and enslaved Greek prisoners, it became popular for a wealthy household to own a physician. These doctors were eventually able to purchase their freedom; however, there was very little prestige found in the profession.

Though these Greek doctors held a great deal of knowledge, cure rates were low. Many people, particularly plebeians who could not afford the prices charged by freed physicians, were skeptical of doctors. These private physicians were well-trained and successful, as the only way to gain more patients was to successfully heal others. Other public physicians were available;

however, they were typically charlatans who cheated the poor and had very little useful medical knowledge. Of course, at the time, there were no formal requirements to become a doctor. Anyone could claim the profession, and gain patients if they were successful. The only training available in the early years of the Roman Empire was hands-on apprentice work.

The work of Hippocrates in the 5th century BCE had a major influence on Roman medical practices. As the Father of Medicine, his work revolutionized medicine, and established it as a legitimate profession separate from theurgy and philosophy. He was the first to conclude that disease was naturally occurring, rather than the work of gods or devils. Though some of his work, such as his belief in humorism — which posited that an imbalance of the four distinct bodily fluids of a person, or their humors, influenced temperament and health — was later proven to be incorrect, his work and approach to medicine had long-lasting effects. Over time, many physicians adopted his discipline and careful standards of lighting, personnel, instruments, and overall care. In addition, they used his Hippocratic Oath (“First, do no harm”).

The conquest of Alexandria was another factor that vastly improved Roman medicine. With access to countless volumes of information dedicated to medicine contained in the libraries there, doctors continued to further study and make important medical advancements.

Hospitals in Rome were originally built solely for the military. As the Roman army became the best-trained and disciplined force in the world, medics improved their medical practices. Superstition faded, replaced by a practical trial-and-error process involving careful observation and intricate notations on treatment. As this knowledge passed from doctor to doctor, military medics continued to hone their abilities.

Following the failed assassination attempt on Caesar, he ordered more hospitals opened in Rome proper, and for physicians to focus on medical advancement. As he hoped to further extend Rome’s reach, Caesar understood that a thriving medical community — supported by the mystical abilities of the Soothsayers — would help keep his Empire healthy and thriving.

In the later years of Caesar's rule, the Roman Medical Corps formed, and the doctors dedicated to it received land grants, titles, and special gifts. This helped remove some of the stigma once associated with practicing medicine. Along with the Corps, the opening of the Army Medical School ensured that every doctor possessed ample training.

Many of the medical advances of ancient Rome persisted for hundreds of years, with surgical specialties and a wide range of medication helping more citizens survive injury or illness. Tools found from archeological digs show many surgical instruments similar to those of modern days.

Roman Military Reference

During the reign of the Empire, Romans placed more focus on the perfection of existing military technologies than on the wholesale creation of new means of warfare. Roman iron-working saw improvement over time, particularly through the use of heat treatment (or carburization). However, those improvements were small and incremental, unlike the radical pace set by other fields, such as transportation.

The Legions of Rome adapted their tactics often. When the Empire fought with an enemy who had success with new provisions or tactics, they quickly integrated them into their units. This focus on continual improvement gave Rome advantages in the creation and use of equipment. Each soldier was equipped appropriately for their role and received armor as well as arms.

Roman Construction Reference

With the Empire stretching into many new territories, few things became as important as a reliable means for armies to travel. Starting with the foundational work put into place by Mesopotamian and Central Asian cultures, the Empire was already crisscrossed by existing roads. However, they were often little more than cultivated paths of dirt that quickly turned into muddy quagmires, delaying the movements of any large units.

To correct this problem, the development of the viae (or "Roman Roads") occurred. To encourage proper drainage and avoid the muddy mess of previous works, the Romans first set curb stones. Then they dug a long pit, on a slight angle as determined by a professional surveyor, which they filled with a layer of sand

or gravel. Soldiers compressed this layer, adding a finer layer of gravel and cemented pave stones over it. A final layer of cement ensured a smooth flat surface. The road's foundation encouraged drainage during rainy seasons, reducing the impact of inclement weather on Roman troop movements.

With an answer for moving people, the Romans similarly worked on improving a way to move water. By using earlier concepts from places such as Egypt and Babylon, Rome capitalized on their skills with civil engineering to build aqueducts, some of which are still in use during the modern day. Returning to their invention of concrete, Rome unshackled the population centers from nearby water sources.

Reference Material: Monsters and Mayhem

Redacted

Reference Material: A Primer on the Culture and Traditions of Rome

Ancient Rome: a bastion of wealth and knowledge, a reminder of times long since passed, a place filled with intrigue and excitement, political machinations, and mysterious rituals. The very mention of Rome calls to mind lavish social events at wealthy villas and bloody displays of physical prowess in the Coliseum. Popular media often centers on the more exciting facets of Roman society — the corrupt political world, the violent gladiatorial fights, and the gluttony and excess — and rarely offers more than a passing nod to the lesser-known aspects. However, in order to fully immerse one's self in this world, particularly as it relates to the *Mystical Rome* Morra Genre, a deeper understanding of the culture and era is necessary.

For serious historians and casual explorers alike, the Roman Empire is a topic of fascination. From religious ceremonies steeped in tradition and superstition to elaborate sporting events, Roman culture teems with unique and intricate details, alien to our modern lives. *Mystical Rome* focuses not only on the mystical aspects of the world, but also on the mundane facets of daily life in the Roman Empire. The Genre offers a wide array of character types and story potential to Directors and players.

The information provided in this section is a historically accurate overview of the traditions of Rome during the time period covered in *Mystical Rome*. It serves to provide Directors and players a glimpse into the world they embrace, and brings any *Mystical Rome* event to life. The devil is in the

details, as they say, and these seemingly trivial details allow for greater immersion.

Although the information here is historically accurate, we offer a mere sliver of what we know of that world. Directors can change the information found here for the sake of story, whether that be adjusting facts, delving more deeply into specific topics, or eschewing a particular facet entirely. Morra Cinematic Game System always supports inclusion and fun over historical accuracy.

The world of Ancient Rome could be, at times, beautiful and advanced, but that does not erase the society's darker side. Political power allowed Patricians to rule harshly over lower-class citizens, while slaves struggled against an inherently exploitative system. Though the culture offered more independence to some marginalized groups, some aspects of Roman culture can still disturb some players. As with any game, a vital part of play is maintaining open lines of communication between players and Directors to ensure everyone leaves a game session feeling fulfilled and excited, rather than inadvertently traumatized. Whenever questionable topics are approached within the world of *Mystical Rome*, the OK Check-in System must be utilized to gauge the comfort level of everyone involved.

Family is Everything

In Rome, the family was the fundamental social unit, though family dynamics were often quite different from those found in modern times.

The *paterfamilias*, or father of the family, stood at the head of the family in a role occupied by the father or eldest living male. The *mos maiorum*, or ancestral customs, gave the paterfamilias absolute power — also known as *patria potestas* — over his household, including his wife, children, grandchildren, and slaves. He had the legal right to disown his children or sell them into slavery. Up until first century BCE, the paterfamilias even had the right to kill those household members who displeased him, though they rarely exercised this right. At times, these households swelled to large numbers, due to adoption and slavery.

Along with this power came many duties. Rome expected him to staunchly uphold the laws of the Twelve Tables and ensure his *familia* followed suit. In addition to fathering and raising healthy children for Rome, maintaining the moral standing of the household, and participating in Roman political, religious, and social events, the paterfamilias performed certain priestly duties

on behalf of his family. These *sacra familiae* honored household gods and the ancestral gods of his gens.

Only a Roman citizen, whether Patrician, plebian, or freedman, could hold the status of paterfamilias, and each household had only one at any given time. Additionally, these citizens were the only ones allowed to own property. Even grown sons had only a stipend, or *peliculum*, to manage their individual homes. Once a paterfamilias passed away, the mantle of leadership went to his oldest son. This practice led to large extended families, many of whom lived in their own homes, beholden to the leader of the extended clan.

One of the more challenging duties of the paterfamilias was arranging marriages for his children. In most families, these were not love matches, but rather political arrangements intended to deliver power and wealth to the paterfamilias. The paterfamilias bartered or traded their daughters, with many finding themselves betrothed by age 12. While Patrician women married at a young age, most Plebian women did not marry until they were in their late teens or early 20s. A typical Roman wedding was a simple, private affair, and the couple only had to claim to be married in order for it to be so. Of course, within the elite households, these affairs were much more elaborate, involving expensive dowries, costly ceremonies with a priest and a marriage contract, and raucous festivities that could last for days.

In Rome, not all marriages were created equal, though all had similar qualities. Roman law recognized three kinds of marriage: *confarreatio*, symbolized by sharing spelt bread and elaborate Patrician ceremonies presided over by the Flamen Dialis and Pontifex Maximus; *coemptio* marriage, practiced by Plebeians and involving the groom purchasing the bride in a symbolic representation of traditional bridal customs; and *usus* marriages, which involved little more than extended cohabitation. Though no difference existed in the legal standing of these marriages, social standing was a different matter altogether. For Patrician families, a wedding was a prime opportunity to showcase their affluence and power.

The night before her wedding, the bride offered her childhood toys and clothing to her family *lares*, a sacrifice symbolizing her coming of age. Among the items offered up were her *lunula*, a

crescent moon pendant worn by young girls as a protective talisman against corrupting forces. Her wedding day was the first day she could wear an adult woman's Roman dress, when she was draped in opulent fabric in celebration of the occasion.

Just as marriage was a simple process, divorce was both common and uncomplicated, particularly if new political opportunities arose. Either the husband or wife could elect to divorce in order to foster more valuable family ties. As marriage was simply a matter of both parties choosing to be together, getting a divorce required only one person to decide they were finished with the relationship. When a spouse wanted the marriage to end, the relationship came to a quick close. Often, the dowry was one of the few points of contention between divorcing spouses. Typically, if the wife was not at fault for ending the marriage, such as when the husband committed adultery or failed to manage household expenses appropriately—she could reclaim her dowry for her father or guardian. If children were involved, the husband could claim part of the dowry.

Additionally, a paterfamilias could decide whether an infant lived or died. When a child was born, a midwife placed the infant on the ground, and its survival was dependent on the whims of the father. Should the paterfamilias pick the child up, the family accepted it. If a child was deformed, or the paterfamilias felt his household could not support another child, the midwife exposed the baby to the elements, where it either perished or was taken in by another family, destined to become a slave. The paterfamilias performed this ritual, called *tollere liberos*, typically without permission from the mother. Even without these traditions, only half of all children survived to their 10th birthday. This mortality rate meant that women who successfully bore a certain number of live children enjoyed additional benefits.

Rome expected parents to train and educate their children in Latin, reading, writing, arithmetic, and virtues considered most vital in Ancient Rome— reverence for the gods, respect for the law, truthfulness, and self-reliance. Until the age of seven, when their education formally began, all children were considered infants. From there, young men left the home to pursue education and enjoyed their first introduction to public society, while young women remained in the home to learn the finer arts of hearth and home. Sometime between the ages of 14 and 16,

young boys transitioned into adulthood. This ceremony involved the discarding of the crimson-bordered toga of youth and donning the pure white toga of adult men. From here, the young man travelled to the Forum where his name was added to the list of citizens. For young women, childhood persisted until she wed.

Though women often had multiple children, if they didn't perish during childbirth, many Roman families were quite small. With a heavy emphasis on accumulating respect for one's family name, adoption became commonplace within the Empire. Typically, a paterfamilias adopted a nephew or grandson into his family, though some masters freed a slave in order to officially adopt him and name him an heir.

Roman Virtues

The *Via Romana*, or the Roman Way, described a large number of virtuous qualities required of all citizens of the Roman Republic. Rome drew many of these virtues and qualities from the poets of antiquity and utopian tales describing men as cleaving closely to all virtues. The state intended these virtues to act as moral and social guides, a means of preventing and correcting offenses as well as demanding self-reflection and community participation. All ethical and moral Romans embodied these virtues, or at least made great efforts to do so.

Two categories of Roman existed: private virtues and public. Romans embraced private virtues within a domus while they shared public virtues with society as a whole. Deities personified many virtues, to be worshipped during festivals and holidays. Others who firmly believed in these virtues received those who failed to uphold them poorly, as these virtues remained the only way to ensure a civilization lasted.

Although the following list is not exhaustive, the most common private virtues are below:

- *Auctoritas* or Spiritual Authority, was a virtue largely aimed at the paterfamilias. It represented one's social standing in Roman society, built through exchanging favors, experience, and dedication to the Empire.
- *Comitas*, or Humor, referred to one's genial and affable behavior towards others. Romans treated others of similar social standing with courtesy and respect.

- *Clementia*, or Mercy, indicated one's compassion and kindness towards others. Many of the elite citizens of Rome practiced *Clementia* through charitable donations.
- *Dignitas*, or Dignity, was one's personal pride and their feeling of self-worth. Romans took pride in their achievements, rather than demurring.
- *Firmitas*, or Tenacity, refers to one's dedication to their purpose in life.
- *Frugalitas*, or Frugality, was simplicity of style and economy. Many Patricians set this particular virtue to the side when entertaining, or otherwise seeking to impress their peers or clients.
- *Gravitas*, or Gravity, was one's sense of personal responsibility, and the ability to treat important and/or delicate matters appropriately.
- *Honestas*, or Respectability, referred to the overall image that one presented to others. Citizens who hoped to make a name for themselves took great care to cultivate their *Honestas*.
- *Humanitas*, or Humanity, was one's civility and culture. Foreigners and the uneducated severely lacked in *Humanitas* according to Rome.
- *Industria*, or Industriousness, referred to one's dedication to their work. Most Romans worked diligently, whatever their profession might be. Of course, elite citizens often took credit for work performed by their slaves or servants.
- *Pietas*, or Dutifulness, referred to respecting Roman society as the natural order of life, as described by the Senate. Encompassing more than just religious piety, this virtue also included ideas of patriotism and devotion to others.
- *Prudentia*, or Prudence, involved foresight, wisdom, and personal discretion. While it was common knowledge that most Patrician Roman citizens enjoyed sexual dalliances and wild parties, it was expected they undertook these activities with a measure of discretion.
- *Salubritas*, or Wholesomeness, referred less to one's actions and more to physical health and cleanliness. Romans believed that prevention was the best method of maintaining health, and *Salubritas* was of utmost importance to most households.
- *Severitas*, or Sternness, referred to one's ability to control their emotions. *Paterfamilias* responded to any situation in their household with a calm and fair demeanor.

- *Veritas*, or Truthfulness, was one's ability to deal with others in an honest and forthright manner.

While some public virtues mirrored the private ones, the State considered these virtues the height of import for most Roman citizens. Romans adhered to these virtues while in the public sphere, and fought for them if necessary.

- *Abundantia*, or Abundance, sought to ensure there was enough food, shelter, and prosperity for all segments of society: Patrician, Plebeian, and freedman alike.
- *Aequitas*, or Equity, referred to dealing with others in a fair and equitable manner. This virtue meant both dealings within the government and between individuals.
- *Bonus Eventus*, or Good Fortune, was commemoration of important, positive events within the Empire. All citizens celebrated the good fortune of not only their individual domus, but all of the Roman Empire.
- *Clementia*, or Mercy, as a public virtue referred to showing kindness and mercy to other nations and their citizens, particularly those who surrendered to the Empire.
- *Concordia*, or Concord, referred to harmony among the Roman people. Citizens attempted to maintain harmonious relationships with their neighbors. This virtue in the public sense also applied to the relationships between Rome and other nations, as well as the desire to maintain harmony whenever possible.
- *Felicitas*, or Happiness, was the public celebrations of all the positive aspects of Roman society. Citizens enjoyed and celebrated their rights and responsibilities.
- *Fides*, or Confidence, was holding faith in the government and the rulings of the Senate.
- *Genius*, or Spirit of Rome, was the public acknowledgement and celebration of the combined spirit of Rome and its people. Citizens expressed great loyalty towards Rome and its society.
- *Iusticia*, or Justice, was adherence to the laws of Roman society. All citizens upheld the laws, and ensured others did so as well.
- *Laetitia*, or Joy, was a celebration of thanksgiving, a virtue extolled after a major crisis was resolved. These celebrations were public events; however, this virtue could also refer to personal and familial crises.

- *Liberalitas*, or Liberality, referred to generosity towards others, particularly through charitable donations.
- *Libertas*, or Freedom, was one of the most important public virtues, and one that was also valued by many other cultures. Even slaves had the opportunity to gain their *Libertas* eventually, through hard work and dedication to their masters.
- *Nobilitas*, or Nobility, referred to noble actions within the public sphere. Although a paterfamilias treated those within his domus with a fair and even hand, he was held to an even higher standard when in public.
- *Ops*, or Wealth, was the acknowledgement and celebration of the prosperity of the Roman world. Even those who were part of the lower classes of society celebrated the prosperity of others.
- *Patientia*, or Endurance, referred to the ability to weather a crisis with aplomb. Roman women in particular adhered to this public virtue.
- *Pax*, or Peace, was a celebration of the peace within Roman society and between nations. Although Rome was a society that most often conquered others, they still extolled the virtue of *Pax* within these subservient nations.
- *Pietas*, or Piety, in the scope of a public virtue, referred to paying public homage to the gods in an appropriate manner.
- *Providentia*, or Providence, was the ability of Roman society to survive. As a private virtue, this referred to individuals capable of embracing their destiny; the public virtue embraced the destiny of the Empire as a whole.
- *Pudicitia*, or Modesty, referred to chaste and modest behavior while in public. Though many Romans engaged in hedonistic activities while in private, doing so in public was considered in poor taste. Such private activities were rarely discussed among mixed company.
- *Salus*, or Safety, was the concern for public health and welfare. While some affluent families could afford private healthcare from talented physicians, many Romans relied on the kindness of others and the altruism of the temples for their healing and health.
- *Spes*, or Hope, referred to holding onto hope of better days, particularly in times of difficulty. Many Romans believed better things always came, as long as they were worthy.

- *Virtus*, or Courage, was a virtue required of leaders of Roman society and government officials. Any citizens in positions of power embraced this virtue in order to maintain their position and affluence.

Although philosophers and poets heavily extolled these virtues, very little literature existed about how one embraced the virtues and modeled their lives in this manner. All Romans cleaved to these virtues, with parents instilling these morals in their children at a young age. Young men, in particular, spent a great deal of time learning the public and private virtues in anticipation of the day when they became paterfamilias.

Society and Class

Ancient Rome had a complex, hierarchy-based social class structure, with freeborn Romans possessing different rights and privileges based on their position within the hierarchy. Perhaps the most important division found in Roman society was between Patrician and Plebeian. Patricians descended from the first Senators, while the majority of Roman citizens belonged to the lower, Plebeian class. Originally, only Patricians could hold public offices, and the two classes forbade intermarriage. Over time, the Plebeians rebelled against the oppressive rule of the Patrician elite, eventually gaining somewhat-equal rights.

After the conflict between classes reached their climax, the division between Patrician and Plebeian became less important. As Plebeian families rose in prominence — some gaining status as *novus homo*, or 'new man' — some Patrician families lost their wealth and prestige, depending solely on their social capital to survive.

During the census, which occurred every five years, the government divided citizens into complex classes, based on the property owned by the paterfamilias. The *Senatores*, or Senators, were the richest landowners among the Roman elite. Their vast estates brought wealth and prestige to the family, and these Patricians ruled the Senate and by extension, the Roman Empire. Traditionally, members of the *Senatores* class could not engage in commercial activity. While Senators inherited their position, when a member failed to meet the expected standards, he was removed.

The *equites*, or equestrians, existed beneath the Senators' rank. They chose business pursuits over political careers. This influential business class often occupied high-ranking military positions.

Beneath the equites class were the Plebeians, who worked for a living as artisans or craftsmen. The Plebeians had further divisions based on relative wealth. Each division enjoyed certain rights within the Empire. At the bottom of the Plebeian class were the *proletarii*, who owned little or no property. The Empire considered these Romans to have nothing to offer, save the ability to produce children. Due to their low social status, these citizens could not vote.

Slaves existed at the very bottom of the social heap, divided between freedmen who purchased or were granted their freedom, and those still under the yoke of their masters. Slaves often were prisoners of war and the reward of conquest, though some were the abandoned children of citizens. Slavery in ancient Rome was never a matter of ethnicity or race, but rather a circumstance of birth or conquest.

While many slaves worked manual labor, some — particularly highly-educated slaves of Greek origin — worked as accountants or physicians. Slaves had few rights, and though they gained some legal protections, they were always considered property. Domestic slaves enjoyed relatively comfortable lives. Although their personal standard of living was nothing like the opulent life of their masters, they nevertheless shared a tiny part of their master's wealth and many were well-educated. The Roman Empire owned some slaves, named *servus publicus*. Most of these slaves worked as servants to the College of Pontiffs, magistrates, or other officials. Some worked in temples or public buildings. All *servus publicus* could earn money for their personal use, as well as acquire reputation and influence to assist in their bid for manumission.

Slaves who earned or purchased their freedom acquired their *libertas*, or liberty, from their master. The former master then became the freedman's patron, sponsoring their entrance into Roman citizenship. In time, freedmen could gain the right to vote, and Rome considered any future children as full citizens of Rome. Once freed, former slaves became members of the Plebeian class.

Although free-born women of Rome were citizens, they could not vote or hold political office. A Roman woman held the same social status as her husband if she was married (even widowed) or her father if she was not. Despite such legal and social restrictions, women from affluent families exerted their influence through private negotiations.

Free subjects of the Empire not born as Roman citizens were called *peregrinus*, or foreigners. The term originally meant any person who didn't hold citizenship, regardless if they were under Roman rule or not. In time, though, those outside of the Empire's borders came to be known as *barbari*, or barbarians. The vast majority of the Empire's inhabitants were peregrini.

Peregrini enjoyed only the most basic of rights. No laws preventing torture, or summary 'justice' at the command of the *legatus Augusti* or provincial governor, existed. Citizens held a significant advantage in legal disputes over peregrini, particularly in regard to land disputes, and social status of the parties often involved swayed verdicts. Additionally, peregrini had direct taxes the state exempted citizens. They could not serve in the legions, though they could serve in the auxiliary regiments, and service of 25 years granted citizenship. Finally, peregrini could not legally marry a Roman citizen, any children of the union were illegitimate. The lack of citizenship ensured peregrini could not designate heirs, and thus their assets became property of the state upon their death.

Writer's Room Commentary: Bleed and Class Warfare

While Ancient Rome was a world filled with brilliant artwork, poetry, and fascinating advances in science and medicine, it certainly wasn't flawless. Her greatest shortcomings can be found among those who belonged to the lower classes. Although Plebeians were citizens, Patricians enjoyed greater wealth and privilege, and they often treated those of the lower class poorly, with little to no repercussions. This class division was one of the integral parts of Roman society.

It's important to keep in mind that actions taken in character that are completely suitable for a Patrician (or plebian) character can result in painful bleed for other players. Before beginning a scene where a character of a lower class might be mistreated or abused, always utilize the OK Check-in System to ensure all participants are comfortable with the content. Additionally, any players uncomfortable with this type of roleplay must be empowered to remove themselves from a scene or scenario that could be damaging on an out-of-character level.

Remember, this game offers a high level of immersive roleplay opportunities, but the first concern of all players is safety and mutual enjoyment. Patrician players can be asked to shift their roleplay, and are required to do so, to help ensure a safe environment for all players.

Roman Naming Conventions: Tria Nomina

Although Roman naming conventions varied wildly between Plebeian and Patrician families, nearly all citizens observed the *tria nomina*. This system included three separate names: the *praenomen*, the *nomen*, and the *cognomen*. While some Romans possessed more, or fewer, names, this particular practice remained one of the distinguishing features between citizens and foreigners. Each of the three names had a different function, and was used at different times and in different contexts.

The oldest of Roman naming conventions, the *praenomen*, was a personal name chosen by the parents. This name was initially bestowed on the *dies lustricus*, or day of purification. Parents carried out this on the eighth day of life for newborn girls and the ninth for boys, and involved gifting the child with his or her bulla, an amulet of protection, as well as a name. Prior to this ritual and the official naming ceremony, parents believed infants vulnerable to malignant forces, as many of them did not survive their first week of life. The praenomen of the child was then formally conferred a second time, upon a girl's wedding day, or when a boy was gifted his *toga virilism* upon reaching his manhood. Sometimes, this name remained the same. For others, it changed based on an event in the child's life.

Typically, only family members, clients, and close friends used praenomina. Outside of this group, most Romans used their nomen, cognomen, or any combination of their three names. Only the most formal of circumstances required the use of all three names together.

Ancient records listed about three dozen male praenomina, with only a handful used on a regular basis. At times, the most popular two or three names accounted for nearly half of the adult male population. Due to this, public records didn't note most praenomina.

Many families, particularly the most affluent Patrician households, utilized a small number of praenomina as a means of distinguishing themselves from the Plebeians, as well as other

Patrician gens. Some prominent Plebeian families also limited the names they used. In all cases, however, there were certainly exceptions, particularly whenever a family had many children.

For example:

- Cornelli: Aulus, Gnaeus, Lucius, Marcus, Publius, Servius, Tiberius
- Julii: Lucius, Gaius, Sextus, Vopiscus
- Claudii: Appius, Gaius, Publius
- Postumii: Aulus, Gaius, Lucius, Publius, Spurius

Additionally, many families avoided certain names, though the reasons for this varied. Some, such as the Junii, avoided the names Titus and Tiberius because they were the sons of the founder of the Republic, executed when they plotted to restore the king's power. Senate forbade others, such as the praenomen of Marcus as one of their members, Marcus Manlius Capitolinus, was condemned for treason. Typically, though, names were left to the discretion of individual families.

At times, parents chose a praenomen based on the circumstance of a child's birth. Some, such as Quintus, Prima, Quarta, Sextus, or Decimus, referred to a child's order of birth or the month in which she was born. Other praenomina referred to the circumstances of the birth, such as Agrippa-- referring to a child born feet-first—or Numerius to one born easily. Others included Lucius to one born at dawn; Manius to one born in the morning; Opiter to a child whose father died; Postumus to a last-born child; or Vopiscus to a child whose twin died.

Occasionally, noble families revived older and less popular names in a bid to make a name for themselves. This helped to set the elite apart from one another and from Plebeian families. The most commonly used male praenomina in Rome during the 1st century BCE were:

- Appius
- Aulus
- Caeso
- Decimus
- Gaius
- Gnaeus
- Lucius

- Mamercus
- Manius
- Marcus
- Numerius
- Publius
- Quintus
- Servius
- Sextus
- Spurius
- Titus
- Tiberius

Although both men and women were granted praenomina on their dies lustricus, many ignored women's praenomina in favor of utilizing their nomen and cognomen. Traditionally, women were known by their family name. For example, a daughter of a man named Antony Marcellus Livia was named Marcella Livia. As all daughters adopted this family name, they were further identified by cognomen such as Quinta, meaning the fifth daughter. Families might also elect to identify additional daughters by a cognomen that fitted her personality or appearance, such as Corda, meaning one who was born late. Although male naming conventions remained quite rigid, families took a great deal of liberty when it came to naming daughters. Variations could include naming a daughter after a location, after her grandparents or other family members, or through creating a new name all together.

The *nomen gentilicium*, or gentile name, indicated which gens a Roman citizen belonged to. A gens or clan, was an extended Roman family who all shared the same nomen due to their descent from a common ancestor. Once, the gens functioned as sovereign nations within the Empire, observing their own rites and rituals and upholding private laws that bound the members of the family. As some gens grew and gained prestige, while others faded into obscurity, these practices largely faded. Some of the more affluent gens retained familial rituals and laws, and many chose one or two of the Roman virtues to guide them.

Commonly used Patrician and Plebeian nomen in the Mystical Rome genre can be found on page XX. Players are encouraged to choose one of these nomen, when applicable.

The *cognomen* was the third name of a Roman citizen, and this took several different forms. Some families utilized the same cognomen in order to differentiate their particular branch of an extensive gens. This resulted in a hereditary combined nomen and cognomen surname, with only the praenomen to differentiate members of the same family. In contrast, the *cognomina ex virtute* was a name granted in recognition of a particularly heroic or virtuous act by the bearer. For example: Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus was gifted his cognomen after capturing the city of Corioli, while Marcus Valerius Corvus gained his cognomen after defeating a vicious foe with aid from a raven. Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus brought the Second Punic War to Africa, where he defeated Hannibal, and Aulus Postumius Albus Regillensis was the commander of the army at the Battle of Lake Regillus.

Other cognomina were derived from a citizen's occupation, such as Pictor for a painter or Caprarius for a goat-herd. Geographical cognomina referred to one's origins, such as a city or region where they were born — for example, Collantinus-- or man from Collatia-- and Campanus, or man from Campania. A geographical cognomen could also refer to the tribe one belonged to, such as Sabinus, or man of the Sabines. These names were not honorific cognomina like Germanicus or Britannicus, which originated in the defeat of these places. Finally, Rome used adoptive cognomina to indicate when a citizen was adopted by another. This cognomen was formed from their former nomen with the -ius ending replaced by -ianus. For example, when L. Aemilius Paullus was adopted by P. Cornelius Scipio, he became P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus.

While many Roman citizens used only one cognomen, it was not uncommon for these to change over time or for additional cognomen to be added to their name. These came in the form of an *agnomen*, which followed the same rules as above, but functioned as a kind of nickname in order to differentiate between citizens who held the same name. At times, these agnomina were physical descriptions of the bearer, such as Rufus, meaning red-haired, or Scaevola, meaning left-handed. Many prominent ancient Romans were referred to only by their cognomen. Cicero, for example, was a shortened version of Marcus Tullius Cicero, and Caesar for Gaius Julius Caesar.

Below is a list of male and female cognomen, their meanings, and the gens they often belonged to. There are many possible cognomen, far too many to list here, and players are encouraged to create cognomen that fit their characters.

- Aculeo/Aculeo – One who is prickly or unfriendly
- Agricola/Agricola – One who is a farmer
- Agrippa/Agrippa – One who was born feet first, typically used by Gens Menenia
- Albinus/Albina – One who is pale, typically used by Gens Posturnia
- Albus/Alba – One who is fair-skinned, typically used by Gens Posturnia
- Ambustus/Ambusta – One who is scalded, typically used by Gens Fabia
- Aquillnus/Aquilina – One who is eagle-like
- Arvina/Arvina – One who is robust, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Asellio/Asellio – One who keeps donkeys, typically used by Gens Sempronia
- Atellus/Atella – One who is dark-haired or dark skinned
- Avitus/Avita – One who is grandfatherly
- Balbus/Balba – One who stutters, typically used by Gentes Acilia, Cornelia, Lucilia, Naevia, Octavia
- Barbatus/Barbata – One who is bearded, typically used by Gentes Cornelia, Horatia, Quinctia
- Bassus/Bassa – One who is plump
- Bestia/Bestia – One who is like an animal, typically used by Gens Calpurnia
- Bibulus/Bibula – One who is a drunkard, typically used by Gentes Furia, Sextia, Calpurnia, Publicia
- Blaesus/Blaesa – One who mispronounces words, slurs speech, or has a lisp, typically used by Gens Sempronia
- Brocchus/Broccha – One who has pronounced teeth
- Brutus/Bruta – One who is stupid or dull-witted, typically used by Gens Iunia
- Bubulcus/Bubulca – One who is a cattle-driver, typically used by Gens Iunia
- Bulbus/Bulba – Onion bulb, typically used by Gens Atilia
- Buteo/Buteo – One who is like a buzzard, typically used by Gens Fabia
- Caecus/Caeca – One who is blind, typically used by Gens Claudia

- Caepio/Caepio – One who is an onion-seller, typically used by Gens Servilia
- Calidus/Calida – One who is hot-headed and rash, typically used by Gens Coelia
- Calvus/Calva – One who is bald, typically used by Gentes Domitia, Veturia
- Camillus/Camilla – A child who helps during sacrifices, typically used by Gens Furia
- Caninus/Canina – One who is dog-like, typically used by Gens Acilla
- Capito/Capito – One who has a large head, typically used by Gens Ateia
- Carbo/Carbo – Charcoal, typically used by Gens Papirii
- Catilina/Catilina – One who is pure or unsullied, typically used by Gens Sergia
- Cato/Cato – One who is shrewd and prudent, typically used by Gentes Hostilia, Porcia
- Catulus/Catula – One who is like a puppy or whelp, typically used by Gens Lutatia
- Celer/Celeris – One who is quick
- Celsus/Celsa – One who is tall, typically used by Gens Papia
- Cethegus/Cethega – Typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Cicero/Cicero – Chickpea, typically used by Gens Tullia
- Cicurinus/Cicurina – One who is gentle, typically used by Gens Veturia
- Cilo/Cilo – One who has a large forehead or large lips, typically used by Gens Flaminia
- Cincinnatus/Cincinnata – One who is curly-haired, typically used by Gens Quinctia
- Cordus/Corda – One who was born late
- Cornicen/Cornicen – One who is a military bugler
- Corvinus/Corvina – One who is crow-like, typically used by Gens Valerii
- Cossus/Cossa – From the archaic praenomen Cossus, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Costa/Costa – A rib, typically used by Gens Pedania
- Cotta/Cotta – Brown or orange, typically used by Gens Aurelia
- Crassipes/Crassipes – One who is club-footed, typically used by Gens Furia
- Crassus/Crassa – One who is fat, typically used by Gentes Claudia, Licinia, Otacilia, Veturia

- Crispus/Crispa – One who has curly hair, typically used by Gentes Sallustia, Vibia
- Culleo/Culleo – A leather sack for carrying liquid, typically used by Gens Terentia
- Cursor/Cursor – One who is a runner or courier, typically used by Gens Papiria
- Curvus/Curva – One who stoops or is bent, typically used by Gens Fulvia
- Denter/Dentra – One who is toothy, typically used by Gens Caecilia
- Dives/Dives – One who is wealthy, typically used by Gens Licinia
- Dolabella/Dolabella – One who is like a hatchet, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Dorsuo/Dorsuo – One who has a large back, typically used by Gens Fabia
- Drusus/Drusa – Typically used by Gens Livia
- Figulus/Figula – One who is a potter
- Fimbria/Fimbria – Edge of clothing or fringe, typically used by Gens Flavia
- Flaccus/Flacca – One who has floppy ears, typically used by Gentes Aviana, Fulvia, Valerii
- Flavus/Flava – One who has blonde hair, typically used by Gens Decimia
- Florus/Flora – One who has light coloration, typically used by Gens Aquilia
- Fronto/Fronto – One who has a prominent forehead
- Fullo/Fullo – One who is a fuller or launderer, typically used by Gens Apustia
- Fusus/Fusa – From the archaic praenomen Fusus, typically used by Gens Furia
- Galeo/Galeo – Helmet
- Gemellus/Gemella – One who is a twin, typically used by Gentes Servilia, Veturia
- Glabrio/Glabrio – One who is a relative of Glaber, typically used by Gens Acilia
- Gracchus/Graccha – Typically used by Gens Sempronia
- Gurgus/Gurgus – One who is greedy or prodigal, typically used by Gens Fabia
- Habitus/Habita – One who is in good physical condition, typically used by Gens Cluentia
- Helva/Helva – One who has dun-colored hair, typically used by Gens Aebutia

- Imperiosus/Imperiosa – One who is domineering, typically used by Gens Manlia
- Iullus/Iulla – From the archaic praenomen Iullus, typically used by Gens Iulia
- Labeo/Labeo – One who has prominent lips, typically used by Gentes Antistia, Atinia, Fabia
- Lactuca/Lactuca – Lettuce, typically used by Gens Valerii
- Laenas/Laenas – A woolly cloak, typically used by Gens Popilla
- Lanatus/Lanata – One who wears wool, typically used by Gens Menenia
- Laterensis/Laternsis – One from the hill side, typically used by Gens Iuventia
- Lentulus/Lentula – One who is slow, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Lepidus/Lepida – One who is charming or amusing, typically used by Gens Aemilia
- Licinus/Licina – One who is spiky or bristly-haired, typically used by Gens Mamilia
- Longus/Longa – One who is tall, typically used by Gentes Sempronia, Sulpicia
- Lucullus/Luculla – One from the grove, typically used by Gens Licinia
- Lupus/Lupa – One who is like a wolf, typically used by Gens Rutilia
- Lurco/Lurco – One who is gluttonous or greedy
- Macer/Macra – One who is thin, typically used by Gens Licinia
- Macula/Macula – One who has a blemish
- Malleolus/Malleola – One who is like a hammer, typically used by Gens Publicia
- Mamercus/Mamerca – From the praenomen Mamercus, typically used by Gens Aemilia
- Marcellus/Marcella – From the praenomen Marcus, typically used by Gens Claudia
- Maro/Maro – One who is bitter, typically used by Gens Vergilia
- Merenda/Merenda – Light afternoon meal, typically used by Gentes Antonia, Cornelia
- Mergus/Merga – One who is like a sea gull
- Merula/Merula – One who is like a blackbird, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Messalla/Messalla – Typically used by Gens Valeriia

- Metellus/Metella – One who follows the army, typically used by Gens Caecilia
- Murena/Murena – One who is like an eel, typically used by Gens Licinia
- Mus/Mus – One who is like a rodent, typically used by Gens Decia
- Musca/Musca – One who is like a fly, typically used by Gens Sempronia
- Nasica/Nasica – One who has a large nose, typically used by Gentes Sempronia, Ovidia
- Natta/Natta – One who is an artisan, typically used by Gens Pinaria
- Nepos/Nepos – One who is a grandchild, typically used by Gens Caecilia
- Nerva/Nerva – One who is vigorous, typically used by Gentes Cocceia, Licinia
- Novellus/Novella – One who is new, typically used by Gens Gavilia
- Ocella/Ocella – One who has small eyes, typically used by Gens Livia
- Pacilus/Pacila – From the praenomen Pacilus, typically used by Gens Furia
- Paetus/Paeta – One who squints or blinks, typically used by Gens Aelia
- Pansa/Pansa – One who is splay-footed, typically used by Gens Vibia
- Papus/Papa – From the praenomen Papus, typically used by Gens Aemilia
- Paterculus/Patercula – One who is like a little father, typically used by Gens Sulpicia
- Paullus/Paulla – One who is small, typically used by Gens Aemilia
- Pavo/Pavo – One who is like a peacock
- Pera/Pera – Shoulder bag, typically used by Gens Iunia
- Pictor/Pictrix – One who is a painter, typically used by Gens Fabia
- Piso/Piso – Mortar, typically used by Gens Calpurnia
- Plancus/Planca – One who is flat-footed, typically used by Gens Munatia
- Poplicola/Poplicola – One who is a friend of the people, typically used by Gens Valerii
- Postumus/Postuma – One who is born after their father's death, typically used by Gens Curtia

- Potitus/Potita – One who has authority, typically used by Gens Valerii
- Praeconinus/Praeconina – One who is related to a herald
- Praetextatus/Praetextata – One who is young, typically used by Gens Sulpicia
- Priscus/Prisca – One who is ancient
- Proculus/Procula – One born during their father's absence, typically used by Gens Plautia
- Pulcher/Pulchra – One who is attractive, typically used by Gens Claudia
- Pullus/Pulla – One who is a child
- Pulvillus/Pulvilla – A small cushion, typically used by Gens Horatia
- Purpureo/Purpureo – One who wears purple or has a purplish complexion
- Quadratus/Quadrata – One who is stocky
- Ralla/Ralla – A tunic of expensive fabric, typically used by Gens Marcia
- Regulus/Regula – One who is a prince, typically used by Gentes Aemilia, Atilia
- Rufus/Rufa – One who has red hair
- Ruga/Ruga – One who is wrinkled
- Rullus/Rulla – One who is uncultivated or boorish, typically used by Gens Servilia
- Rutilus/Rutila – One who has reddish-gold hair
- Salinator/Salinatrix – One who harvests salt, typically used by Gens Livia
- Saturninus/Saturnina – One dedicated to Saturnus
- Scaeva/Scaeva – One who is left-handed, typically used by Gentes Iunia, Marcia, Mucia
- Scapula/Scapula – Shoulder blade, typically used by Gens Quinctia
- Scaurus/Scaura – One who is lame, typically used by Gentes Aemilia, Aurelia
- Scipio/Scipio – Rod or staff, typically used by Gens Cornelii
- Scrofa/Scrofa – One who is like a sow, typically used by Gens Tremelia
- Seneca/Seneca – One who is elderly, typically used by Gens Annaea
- Severus/Severa – One who is strict
- Silanus/Silana – Nose, typically used by Gens Iunia
- Silus/Sila – One who is snub-nosed, typically used by Gens Sergia

- Stolo/Stolo – Shoot of a plant, typically used by Gens Licinia
- Strabo/Strabo – One who is squinty, typically used by Gens Titia
- Structus/Structa – Typically used by Gens Servilia
- Sulla/Sulla – Typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Taurus/Taura – One who is like a bull
- Triarius/Triaria – One who is like a soldier, typically used by Gens Valerii
- Triginus/Trigemina – One who is a triplet, typically used by Gens Curiatia
- Trio/Trio – One of the stars of the Big Dipper, typically used by Gens Lucretia
- Tubertus/Tuberta – One who has a tumor or swelling, typically used by Gens Posturnia
- Tubulus/Tubula – One who is like a tube, typically used by Gens Hostilia
- Tuditanus/Tuditana – One who is like a mallet, typically used by Gens Sempronia
- Tullus/Tulla – From the praenomen Tullus, typically used by Gens Volcatia
- Turdus/Turda – One who is like a thrush, typically used by Gens Papiria
- Varro/Varro – One who is thick-headed, typically used by Gens Terentia
- Varus/Vara – One who is bow-legged, typically used by Gentes Atilia, Licinia, Quinctilia
- Vatia/Vatia – One who is knock-kneed, typically used by Gens Servilia
- Verres/Verres – Pig, typically used by Gens Cornelia
- Vespillo/Vespillo – One who buries the dead, typically used by Gens Lucretia
- Vetus/Vetus – One who is old, typically used by Gens Antistia
- Vitulus/Vitula – One who is like a calf, typically used by Gentes Mamilia, Pomponia
- Volusus/Volusa – From the praenomen Volusus, typically used by Gens Valerii

Although many Roman names followed these naming conventions, players and Directors should utilize whichever conventions best fit their particular game and characters. These lists are far from exhaustive, and players are encouraged to seek naming outside of them when needed.

Women's Rights Under the Law

Life as a woman in the ancient world was never easy, and despite the many advances of the culture, Rome was no exception. No matter their station in life, or their status as citizens, women in ancient Rome enjoyed no public rights. They could not vote, hold public office, stand witness in legal proceedings, or publicly serve in the military. Roman women, Patrician and Plebian alike, bore sons in hopes of bolstering the Empire, as well as manage their household. A Roman woman oversaw cooking and clothing production, supervised slaves, and managed the economic affairs of the home. While the paterfamilias ruled in name, the women of the household met the day-to-day needs of the family.

Though Romans charged a woman's paterfamilias with finding her a suitable husband, she did have some legal power to refuse the marriage. In order to refuse such a match, a woman proved to the courts that her proposed husband was of poor moral character. Though women were allowed to do so, the very young age of first marriages made this a rare occurrence more typically seen in subsequent marriages. Most often, women had little choice but to marry, as those who refused the commands of her paterfamilias ran the risk of banishment from their family. When a woman married, she remained under the control of her father, despite moving into her husband's home, and she maintained the social status of her paterfamilias. Her father remained her legal guardian, and her husband had no legal power over her actions. These so-called free marriages offered the woman a great deal more independence, as fathers rarely concerned themselves with the day-to-day activities of his daughter's household. She could own property, and any inheritance she received belonged solely to her. Further, if a couple separated without her adultery as the cause, most of the bride's dowry was returned to her.

A divorce from a free marriage was relatively simple and involved a wife leaving her husband's home and taking control of her dowry. During the time of Caesar's reign, divorce was common and socially acceptable, often leading to little more than idle gossip rather than any kind of social ostracism or disgrace. Divorce could be initiated by either party for any reason; however, unless the wife could prove before the courts that her

spouse was of bad character, the children remained in his custody.

Among the elite, remarriage was frequent, often happening quite soon after the death of a spouse or a divorce. Though men observed no formal waiting period, women customarily waited ten months to ensure no one questioned paternity of a child. Patrician families often married and divorced in quick succession as these relationships were solely based on political advantage and social advancement. Some women, particularly older ones or those who held a great deal of esteem or property, received leniency in choosing their partner without the approval of their paterfamilias or legal guardian. Children from a wife's first marriage were absorbed into their step-father's family and adopted as his own. When a man retained custody of the children, their mother rarely ever saw them again.

Women who could not marry who they desired — either due to a disparity in social class or the objection of her male guardian — often resorted to concubinage. Unlike affairs or pre-marital relationships, this arrangement was legal and socially acceptable, though a paterfamilias could use this as justification for banishing a wayward child. A concubinage occurred when an otherwise unmarried couple resided together in a monogamous relationship. They freely exchanged gifts in such relationships, and concubines could become a wife, should the law allow. The primary difference between marriage and concubinage was the status of any children born to the couple. Rather than carrying their father's social standing, they bore their mother's status. Most did not deride concubines for their position; however, they weren't afforded the respect they could otherwise gain for being legally and appropriately wed. As there was no shame in these relationships, others treated a concubine like a wife in every respect, even holding power over a household. In many concubinage situations, the concubine found herself with her own political influence and power.

Though women in ancient Rome held no formal rights regarding voting or holding office, they still wielded a great deal of influence over the men in their lives. Wives of high-ranked officials and politicians used this influence to support or impede issues impacting other women within the Empire, funneling their resources through their husband in order to effect change.

Unlike their Patrician husbands, these women operated in subtle, behind-the-scenes ways.

For example, when the state proposed taxes on cosmetics and jewelry in order to fund war efforts, many Patrician women used their influence on male relatives to stop such motions. Others continued to deal in cosmetics, turning to back-alley sellers. These high-born women maintained a whisper network to exchange information, gossip, and plan events without the influence of men. Women used bathing facilities as social gathering spots. Just as the men built Empires while steaming in the caldarium, so too did their wives, though in a subtler manner.

Within high-class families, society expected a woman to be demure, genteel, and compliant with the wills of her father and husband. It wanted her to be intelligent and well-spoken, but not so knowledgeable that she was overbearing and presumptuous. She was the keeper of hearth and home, charged with managing all household activities and needs, all the while bearing as many children as possible in order to ensure the continuation of her husband's name. Her duties also included educating the children — sons and daughters alike — and ensuring they grew to be model Roman citizens. Rome viewed children not solely as a means of continuing a familial lineage, but also as a continuation of Roman culture as a whole.

Although Patrician women needed to be knowledgeable in all household duties — from dyeing and weaving to cooking elaborate meals — it was uncouth for her to take any kind of paid position outside of the home. However, within the lower-class, women had no choice but to take on outside work. Many found employment as laundresses or seamstresses, both of which were considered respectable vocations. Some even worked as midwives or wet nurses, positions that brought a great deal of acclaim and influence to their family. Women who worked as barmaids, actresses, or sex workers were thought to be disreputable and poorly treated as a result, particularly in legal matters. While men dominated the business world, finding a savvy businesswoman who managed her own estates and finances was not uncommon. Affluent women regularly lent money to their peers, or financed public works without permission or input from their husbands or fathers.

In addition to their duties within the home, Roman women needed to effortlessly adhere to the beauty standards of the time — small breasts, wide hips, and rounded bellies were considered the height of beauty and a symbol of wealth and affluence. Young girls bound their breasts in an effort to achieve the preferred look, and grown women turned to a wide range of cosmetics and beauty products to maintain the youthful appearance expected of elite women. Composed of materials such as lead, tin, excrement, and sulfur, these products were dangerous to the wearer. Marks of great beauty included pale, unblemished skin and long eyelashes. Romans viewed long eyelashes, in particular, as a physical manifestation of a woman's chastity. Women removed all body hair by regularly shaving, plucking, utilizing pumice stones, or waxing using a resin paste. Elite women had access to a *cosmetae*, a female slave skilled in the art of adorning her mistress in *cultus* — jewelry, makeup, and perfume.

Although Roman men expected women to maintain their appearance even as they aged, they met the use of cosmetics to achieve the ideal aesthetic with ridicule and derision. The Latin word for makeup — *lenocinium* — was the same word used to reference sex workers. Nearly all surviving texts illustrate this point succinctly, with many men equating the use of too many cosmetics to a kind of witchcraft. Despite the disapproval of men, Roman women from all classes enjoyed the use of cosmetics, as indicated by the thriving trade dealing in such items.

From birth, mothers taught their daughters to behave as befit their social station. This included how to behave properly in public, how to successfully manage a household, and how to manage other domestic duties. These lessons comprised of simple math and reading skills, as well as learning to spin, weave, and dye fabric for household clothing. Young women learned to staunchly defend their chastity, modesty, and reputation. Though young girls attended public school alongside their male counterparts, this limited education ceased when the girl was still quite young. Elite families continued the education of the daughters at home with private tutors, encouraging their skills and interests in hopes of molding them into better wives and citizens.

Some believed the overeducation of young women led to pretentious behavior and sexual promiscuity, using the lack of education as another protection for the chastity of the daughters of Rome. Despite this fear, some elite Roman women rose to prominence as musicians, philosophers, poets, and even orators. Hortensia, the daughter of one of Cicero's greatest rivals, was well-renowned for her eloquence and oration skills. Though many of the bright young women of Rome had little access to education — particularly in the areas seen as belonging to the purview of men — they could achieve success in areas where males traditionally dominated.

Much like modern children, young Roman girls received dolls to play with, constructed according to Roman beauty ideals. Upon her transition to adulthood, they sacrificed these dolls to either the goddess Diana or Venus. Unlike many societies of the time, young girls attended social events and religious ceremonies so she could learn proper behavior and Roman culture. Children fully participated in society, and exposed to the views and ideals of Rome from a young age.

The college of the Vestals was one place where Roman women could enjoy freedom, status, privilege, and political influence. The mandatory vow of chastity ensured these women did not marry or bear children; however, harsh consequences the state levied heavy consequences against any Vestal who broke her vow.

As in many cultures of the time, women in Ancient Rome had relatively little freedom or control over their lives. In many ways, men treated them as little more than property, belonging to their father even after they had reached the age of majority. Even their names were not their own, as infant daughters received the feminized version of her father's nomen, with subsequent daughters using distinguishers such as Julia the Younger or Lepida Quarta. Despite the harshness of legal and societal restrictions, however, many women of the era thrived and excelled in all areas of expertise, even surpassing their male counterparts.

Writers Room Commentary: Playing a Woman in a Time of Extreme Misogyny

Though women in Ancient Rome had limited independence, outliers and exceptions always existed. Some women earned places in male-dominated

spheres such as public speaking or gladiatorial fights, while others found freedom in a more subversive manner. The women of Rome were strong and proud, and deeply involved in society and culture, despite those who tried to prevent them from such.

It is important to remember that in the *Mystical Rome* Genre, the most important aspect of the game is the enjoyment of the players, rather than historical accuracy. Women must be welcomed in creating characters who buck traditional Roman gender roles. While these characters might wreak havoc within the game world, the enjoyment of all is of the utmost importance.

Players of female characters are encouraged to utilize the safety methods (page XX) in order to prevent unwanted topics or advances from other players.

Sexuality

Many saw Ancient Rome as a place of depravity and excess. Lavish parties, extravagant gladiatorial events, and treacherous politics were nothing compared to the sex lives of most Romans. The state promoted sexuality as a matter of state security and a method of ensuring the success of the Roman Empire. Men and women indulged in sexual excess — within legal bounds, of course — so that Roman culture continued to propagate through the generations. Among the educated elite, different philosophical viewpoints held sex in different lights; however, all agreed it was a necessary part of Roman life. Reproduction and children were physical manifestations of the blessings of Rome, and a wide host of deities ruled over relationships, sex, and reproduction.

Roman sexuality was incredibly phallocentric, as can be surmised by much of the literature, artwork, philosophical treatises, and jewelry of the time. Young Roman boys received a bulla to wear, a phallic-shaped amulet intended to ward off the evil eye and malevolent supernatural forces. Artists crafted other artwork, such as wind chimes, to resemble the uncircumcised penis. Over 120 terms and metaphors existed for penis, with many of them referring to it as an instrument of aggression or war.

A great deal of superstition also surrounded sex and intimacy. For example, bad breath and rotten teeth were widely believed to be caused by performing oral sex and seen as physical manifestations of moral decay and corruption. The mouth provided a citizen the ability to speak. Their peers often mocked free men known to perform oral sex, and respectable men did not expect or desire fellatio from their wives. However, both men

and women hired sex workers specializing in performing oral sex, and their services were in high demand.

Romans found sex so important that it was regulated by religious traditions and rituals. Citizens used these rituals and magic to improve their sex lives. An *amatorium* was a love charm or potion, and *defixiones* were binding spells. Aphrodisiacs, anaphrodisiacs, contraceptives, and abortifacients were readily available in markets, from physicians, or even in sacred temples. Some of these were potions or poultices, while others were intricate rituals intended to solve the problem. Freelance priests plied their goods to unwitting clients, claiming they had divine blessings. People left votive offerings in the form of breasts or penises at healing sanctums, and even the Vestal Virgins, with their staunch vow of chastity, worshipped a sacred phallus as one of their religious relics. Even the fire the Vestals maintained was viewed as the embodiment of sexual purity of Rome as a whole.

Writers Room Commentary: Abortion in Ancient Rome

Priests, herbalists, and charlatans alike peddled a wide variety of contraception and abortion options for women in need. These varied wildly from blessed items to surgical interventions. Roman law did not forbid abortions, however many believed it was immoral to perform an abortion after 40 days of gestation (or, in the case of a female fetus, 80 days). When Rome's population declined, societal pressure to procreate was on the rise, and with it, those vital medical offerings were at risk.

Although Rome saw public nudity as distasteful, many public religious rituals and celebrations involved sex and nudity. Traditional Lupercalia celebrations, for example, involved fertility rites. Floralia, a plebian fertility celebration held in April, involved nude dancing and sex workers staging mock gladiator games. Some of these rites were open only to female participants, such as the Bona Dea rituals, led and organized by the Vestal Virgins. A great deal of mystery surrounds the Bona Dea rituals, as protocol strictly forbade men from participating or even viewing the rites. For the duration of the ritual, women of all social classes — from slave to Patrician — celebrated womanhood, virginity, and fertility. These rituals were filled with music and entertainment, with any mention of men or male influence strictly forbidden. In 62 BC, Publius Clodius Pulcher became infamous for his attempt to gain entrance to the Bona Dea rituals by disguising himself as a woman, resulting in a political

scandal in which he was accused of incest. Many men at the time imagined these all-female rites as drunken lesbian orgies that they might enjoy watching.

Although Romans enjoyed a great deal of sexual freedom, they remained a society strictly governed by the social mores of the time. All citizens showed a level of *pudor*, or modesty, while in the public sphere, and those who strayed too far found themselves punished by censors for sexual misconduct. These strict virtues applied to men and women alike, though society held women to a far higher standard than their male counterparts.

Outside of specific festivals and within the public baths, where men and women often bathed together, public nudity was a disgrace and a sign of the Empire's descent into moral depravity. This disapproval was less a matter of suppressing the sexual desires of citizens — as physicians and philosophers alike extolled the virtue of regular, satisfying intercourse — and more an additional means of dignifying and marking a citizen. Often, public nudity occurred only in war, when Romans stripped and led away captives, or among slaves displayed naked in order to allow potential buyers to evaluate their purchase.

Despite the social mores against public nudity, erotic artwork was present in both private homes and in public locations. A great deal of Roman artwork was homoerotic, particularly pieces found in public spaces. Unlike the penis, many Romans believed the vagina was a filthy body part, and very little art or literature focused on the female body. Romans did not sexualize breasts as they saw them as a method for feeding young or expressing grief.

Free men in Ancient Rome had a great deal of sexual agency, which they utilized to the fullest. It was natural and socially unremarkable for men to be attracted to teenage youths of both sexes, and no moral censure existed for men who had sex with other men— provided the relationship didn't infringe on the rights and prerogatives of his male peers. As with all aspects of Roman life, men adhered to the rigid class structure in this situation. For example, there was no shame in taking a male slave or freedman as a lover. However, the hypermasculinity of the era dictated that citizens ought to take on the active role in these relationships.

Romans believed men who allowed themselves to be penetrated threatened their sexual integrity and liberty as free citizens. They specifically thought men who enjoyed taking on the passive role in such relationships were a danger to society branded a *cinaedus*, which led to social ostracization. Legally, the state did not recognize same-sex marriages; however, some couples went through traditional marriages rites when entering into a same-sex concubinage relationship.

Although Roman men fathered children within their marriage, no shame or moral failing occurred when he formed relationships with sex workers, slaves, or concubines. Unmarried men enjoyed relationships with women of any social or legal status, and part of a young man's coming of age involved a trip to a reputable brothel. Men controlled their sexual relationships, as a lack of control indicated a man could not govern others. Furthermore, men eschewed so-called low sensual pleasures, as it eroded the elite male's identity as a cultured person.

Unmarried women, on the other hand, were strictly forbidden from participating in any activities that might insinuate that she was not chaste. Though society charged young, unmarried Roman women with safeguarding their chastity, the new bride was an immodest lover within the confines of her marriage, expressing and exploring her passions. Even when women were chaste or loyal to their husbands, many women—married and unmarried alike—enjoyed decadent sapphic relationships. Unwitting husbands encouraged such friendships so their wives could maintain an active social life.

Whereas men took lovers of both sexes, women attracted to other women were an unnatural anomaly. At the time, society believed those who participated in lesbian relationships to have overly large sexual appetites, a symptom of moral failure. Furthermore, Romans believed sex required penetration, so many assumed these affairs involved toys or a comically enlarged clitoris. Despite attempts to demonize these relationships, it was not uncommon for women to have female lovers. Slaves, sex workers, and concubines often filled this role. Many women maintained romantic relationships with one another, framed as close friendships.

Despite this disparity, men and women alike enjoyed affairs with sex workers and concubines. Though illegal, particularly for

women, the state rarely brought these cases before the courts, and then only to preserve the social standing of the husband. However, a wife's infidelity was grounds for divorce, and husband's the same if it interfered with his other responsibilities to the Empire.

Sexual intimacy between couples was a private matter. Even when consulting a physician or seeking marital assistance from a temple, married couples maintained a level of discretion. Despite this, the wedding of a Roman couple was peppered with dirty jokes and bawdy songs intended to bless the couple with an exciting love life and great fecundity.

As the vast majority of surviving writings come from the male hand, there was little information regarding the true love lives of Roman women. Many Roman men felt it was their duty to control the sexuality of the women in their lives, by which they safeguarded the future of Rome. Moral legislation focused on removing women's sexual freedom.

Sex work was legal, and widespread throughout the Roman Empire, with the state regulating the industry. Women obtained a license in order to deal in prostitution, and they faced heavy taxes against their wages. Men from all classes utilized sex workers, and there was no moral failing in hiring one. Although men engaged such workers, a great deal of shame existed in *being* a sex worker. The state required women who legally practiced sex work to register with the aediles. Occasionally, socially prominent women registered as sex workers in order to avoid prosecution for adultery.

Sex workers were one of the classes of people categorized as *infames*, or those of ill repute. This legal status could not be escaped once given, as once a woman defiled herself in such a manner, she could never regain her honor. Those who gained this status were subject to corporal punishment — which was otherwise reserved only for slaves. Furthermore, laws did not protect infames from certain acts, particularly those concerning rape.

Despite the difficulties many sex workers faced, it was a thriving trade within Rome, and some sex workers even achieved a certain measure of respect. Often, they entertained clients in lavish brothels, though many workers did not have such support.

Female sex workers typically wore distinctive clothing, ranging from decadent sheer silk tunicas to male togas.

As Romans viewed slaves as property, they were exempt from the protections offered citizens of Rome and had little sexual agency. Owners could do as they pleased with their slaves, be it a forced relationship or hiring them out for sex work. Owners carefully controlled the relationships of their slaves, as any children born added to their overall wealth.

As in all arenas of their lives, Roman soldiers showed great self-discipline in matters of sex and romance. Soldiers convicted of adultery were dishonorably discharged, and convicted adulterers could not enlist. Of course, a large number of camp followers, including sex workers, attended the army. While some commanders attempted to bar sex workers from the camps, soldiers largely ignored these orders.

Although Romans cared little for the sexual desires of slaves or sex workers, rape or sexual assault against a citizen of Rome was a capital offense. Every Roman citizen in good standing, regardless of status, was theoretically protected by these laws. Raping a citizen was primitive and immoral, and carried punishments up to death. Men who were raped bore no loss of legal or social standings, nor were they considered morally corrupt or emasculated. Many female victims elected not to prosecute, for fear of dragging their personal lives out in the open. Even with these laws in place, and the disgust many expressed for rapists, it was a common occurrence, particularly among slaves, sex workers, and lower-class citizens.

Gender

The citizens of Ancient Rome viewed gender quite differently than most ancient societies. Rather than male or female, they adhered simply to *vir*, or the idea of traditional male masculinity. There were men, and then everyone else. Rome scrutinized men who did not adhere to the strict moral codes of masculinity, or who preferred to embrace a more effeminate method of living. Since it was illegal for Roman Citizens to be emasculated, living a life counter to the beliefs of *vir* led to a great deal of trouble.

Despite societal pressures and views, many in the Roman Empire elected to eschew their assigned sex. For women, they accomplished this by strict adherence to social mores and

proving she was worthy. Although rare, this led to female senators and even soldiers. If one had enough power and wealth, they could make nearly any social controversy disappear. While male citizens of Rome behaved in a certain manner, including serving the Empire in the military, some preferred to put aside their *vir*—and the accompanying benefits—and enjoy a less brutal lifestyle.

Some who threw off the chains of their gender found their way to Cybele's cults. Her priests, known as the Galli, castrated themselves and lived their lives as eunuchs. This practice was illegal for Roman citizens; however, the cult always supported and protected those who dedicated themselves to Cybele, also known as *Magna Mater*, or the Great Mother. As a cult, they put aside traditional gender expectations.

Roman Graffiti: Poetic Warfare

Unlike modern times, Ancient Rome did not discourage graffiti, but encouraged it as a form of self-expression or advertisement. Graffiti was found everywhere, from the opulent dining rooms of Patrician homes to the *popina* of the common man. Men, women, and children from all walks of life, from illiterate slave to senate speaker, utilized graffiti as a means of communicating with one another, sharing their pleasure or distaste, advertising, or artwork and poetry. At times, the scrawlings found on Roman walls were vulgar, such as a picture depicting a sex worker and her patron, or wild boasts such as *My many lovers walk crooked*. Some items, such as *popina* menus or business advertisements, were carved into the walls directly, while the more expensive and elaborate political bids were typically painted.

Some Romans hired talented graffiti artists to share information, or defeat their rivals through wit and art. This came in the form of politicians seeking votes or looking to discredit rivals, or new businesses seeking to build their customer base. At times, these insult artists warred over a wall or sliver of space, each responding to the previous messages with new insults or threats. Such displays invariably drew a crowd of onlookers anxious to see who won in the war of words. Successful graffiti artists were highly sought after, and well-paid by affluent politicians or businessmen in need.

Without regular publications such as magazines or newspapers, residents of Rome depended on graffiti for news and gossip they might otherwise miss. People could easily repair or paint over

walls, whereas paper was far too expensive for any but the most affluent households. Graffiti messages also quickly spread through the streets and was used by the lower classes to help improve their reading and writing abilities.

In many ways, the graffiti of ancient Rome was the first form of social media.

Night Life

When night fell in the imperial city, the streets transformed from gleaming colonnades of marble to poorly-patrolled, dark and dangerous streets. Narrow alleyways with no light provided the perfect cover for cretins looking for an easy payday. Watchmen spent their time looking for the fires that regularly broke out in the tenement blocks, rather than stopping petty thieves. Despite the inherent dangers, night time in Rome was filled with excitement and parties for Plebeians and Patricians alike, though their celebrations differed wildly.

For Plebeians, one of the most popular gathering places was the *popina*, a wine bar typically stocked with simple, easy-to-prepare foods, and a variety of wines of varying qualities. With most tenement housing lacking basic cooking amenities, many Plebeians depended on the *popina* for meals and as a central location for socialization.

Found on street corners or in the midst of busy thoroughfares, most *popina* had a wide shop front opening that faced the street, and a low counter to display available goods. Stools and tables were available for patrons to eat, drink, socialize, or participate in more illicit activities, such as prostitution or gambling. Elaborate decorations and graffiti adorned the walls of the *popina*, all intended to draw the eye of passersby.

Unlike the *popina*, which only offered food and drink, the *caupona* was more akin to modern inns or motels, as they also offered overnight accommodations. Although the *xenia*, or the laws of hospitality, demanded travelers be given shelter and sustenance, the central location of Rome and its incredible influx of travelers, especially during festivals, meant more housing was necessary. People could find these *caupona* on all roads leading to Rome, though foreigners and Plebeians largely used them. Most aristocracy could easily find lodging with other Patrician families.

In both the *popina* and *caupona*, visitors spent their time enjoying board games such as *tali*, or knucklebones; *nux*, or marbles; *Latrunculi*, a form of Roman chess; and *Terni Lapilli*, a game similar to tic-tac-toe. A game called Lucky Sixes resembled backgammon and involved figures that came together to form a philosophical phrase or joke. Though these games could be commonly found amidst social events of the Plebeians, the aristocracy also played.

In 55 BCE, Rome erected its first permanent theater structure. A general of the same name built the Theater of Pompey, and it stood in the southern section of the *Campus Martius*, or Field of Mars. The first permanent building erected in the *Campus Martius*, Pompey only secured permission to build the theater by dedicating it to Venus. With seating for 20,000 attendants and a 300-foot stage, the theater was yet another mark of the glory of Roman construction. Along with an expansive collection of fountains and statues, the Theater of Pompey became a popular location for political meetings. The building only grew in infamy after the failed attempt on Caesar's life.

Though public opinion of actors was low — placing them within the same social strata as prostitutes and criminals — Plebeians and Patricians alike flocked to the theater to enjoy a variety of entertainment. Many of the tragedies and comedies performed on the stage were adapted from popular Greek works. Rome treated even her most popular actors quite poorly, though. Most actors were slaves who performed at the behest of their masters, subject to harsh discipline if their performance was faulty. Roman plays often included violence, and it was not unheard of for actors to die during their performances. In time, theater became an outlet for political statements, though they largely remained related to religious festivals honoring the gods.

All other entertainment, even the arena, paled in comparison to the lavish dinner parties hosted by the wealthiest Patrician families. Often lasting as long as eight hours, these parties were the height of excess, intended to impress clients and business partners with the family's wealth, as displayed by food and entertainment.

Among the aristocracy of Ancient Rome, the consumption of food and drink was a vital social ritual known as the *convivium*, or

banquet. The Patricians typically hosted three different types of gatherings: the *epulum*, or public feast, was open to all inhabitants of a city and accommodated large numbers of diners; the *cena*, or dinner party, typically began in mid-afternoon; and the *comissatio* was the drinking party.

The Patricians held these private parties in the *triclinium*, the three-couch room. This room had three long couches arranged along the walls of the room in a U-shape, with a single table in the center for serving food. The host arranged seating by importance, and they along with honored guests enjoyed the couches, socializing easily with everyone. Particularly large rooms could accommodate more couches and more guests. While banqueting, guests lounged on these couches, with only small children sitting upright while dining.

During the festivities, guests enjoyed opulent meals, including expensive and difficult to obtain delicacies such as pheasant, oysters, shellfish, venison, or wild boar. Even forbidden food, due to *sumptuary* laws, was consumed at the most exclusive and lavish feasts. These laws, in theory, prevented the mob from rising up against the Patricians for excessive wealth. At these banquets, wine mixed with water heated in boilers known as *authepsae* flowed freely throughout the meal, with the parties lasting long into the night.

Entertainment at these feasts was just as lavish as the meal, and yet another mark of the host's affluence. Entertainment ranged from poetry recitations to gladiatorial fights. Musical performances involved choral, flute, water organ, and lyre arrangements, while more active forms of entertainment included acrobats, dancing girls, pantomime, and even tricks performed by trained lions and leopards. Poetic, historical, or dramatic performances were also quite popular, particularly during the early hours of the soiree. Staff and slaves participated in the entertainment, singing while serving guests or providing visual distraction with attractive waiters.

Though much of Roman life dedicated itself to work and business, all inhabitants enjoyed feasts and festivals, private parties, and evocative entertainment. From slave to Patrician, Romans spent their days working hard and their nights indulging.

Bath Houses

Bathing in Ancient Rome was more than a means of maintaining cleanliness, but a popular social activity practiced by all classes. Thanks in large part to taxes based on the size of pipes entering a home, most private *domus* could not afford to maintain baths of their own, and this gave rise to the popular *balnae* and *thermae*. *Balnae* were smaller, simple facilities, privately owned by wealthy families, while the *thermae* were sprawling imperial bath complexes. Both were open to the public for a small fee, though this fee was waived on holidays or festival days. *Thermae* typically opened around lunchtime and continued to serve patrons until dusk.

While many smaller *balnae* dotted the city, the larger *thermae* offered more amenities, exquisite art and entertainment, and better social opportunities. Some of the largest *thermae* serviced up to 8,000 people daily, and went through up to 10 tons of wood each day. Opulent marble walls, intricate tiled designs, and large windows made these popular spots as beautiful as they were functional.

The larger *thermae* all contained three principal rooms: the *caldarium*, or hot bath; the *tepidarium*, or warm bath; and the *frigidarium*, or cold bath. Particularly opulent *thermae* also offered steam baths: the *sudatorium*, or moist steam bath, and the *laconicum*, a dry, hot room. Some offered additional amenities such as the *plaestra*, an open-air gymnasium for men to participate in weight lifting, discus throwing, or other strenuous exercise. Sweating heavily allowed the body to be purged of toxins and dirt, and many patrons enjoyed breaking up their bathing with brisk jogs, weight lifting, or wrestling.

Some of the more opulent *thermae* offered additional luxuries to their patrons such as libraries, sitting rooms for socializing, lecture halls, art galleries, and small restaurants for extended visits. Many Roman citizens visited the *thermae* on a daily basis, and the lengthy bathing process made this the perfect opportunity for business dealings, marriage arrangements, and courtship. Although men and women alike could use the *thermae*, separate entrances existed for slaves, men, and women. Women's facilities were significantly smaller and children were not permitted within the public *thermae*. Though many facilities offered separate bathing facilities for men and women, others allowed for any patrons to freely mingle. Often, a

separate set of baths was maintained for women, who could utilize either the female bathing facilities or the main pools as they desired.

Once a visitor paid their entrance fee, they utilized the baths as long as desired. A typical visit to the *thermae* was quite similar to modern day spa trips. First, the visitor disrobed and handed their clothes to an attendant or *capsarius*, a slave dedicated to carrying their master's towels, oils, and other necessities. From there, a visitor participated in physical activity to build up a sweat before moving into the tepidarium, which prepared them for a visit to the caldarium. Upon exiting the caldarium, slaves or a professional masseuse massaged olive oil into the visitor's skin before scraping it off with a *strigil*, a dull curved blade that helped to remove excess dirt and sweat from the visitor's skin. From here, the visitor returned to the tepidarium and then frigidarium to cool down, before stepping into the main pool to swim or socialize.

Like many structures in the Roman Empire, the *thermae* were architectural wonders. Where natural hot springs already existed, artisans built *thermae* around them. Where water was piped in from aquifers, visitors depended on the *hypocaust*, an ancient central heating technique that produced and circulated hot air below a room in order to warm it. Engineers carefully crafted these marvels to allow the caldarium to reach proper temperatures. Pillars of tile and concrete held up the ceiling of the hypocaust, allowing heat and smoke to circulate through the enclosed area and up into the floor of the pools above. As the hypocaust required a great deal of fuel and manpower, only large public baths and the homes of the most affluent utilized this method.

Although most Romans regularly used the *thermae*, some found the entire practice distasteful with good reason. The baths rarely replaced water, and pools often gathered dirt, oil, and excrement from the many regular visitors. Despite the dangers of bacteria-ridden waters, the baths fulfilled many aspects of life the Romans believed led to good health: bathing, eating, massage, and exercise.

Economy of Rome

With vast stretches of land and great stores of both natural and human resources, Rome was a mercantile juggernaut. With such

a huge population, the city heavily focused on both farming and importing food to ensure citizens of the Empire had food. Thanks to ongoing war and conquest, slaves were cheap and plentiful, making up much of the labor force.

Agriculture was a necessity in Ancient Rome, and many of the social elite idealized this way of life. Of course, the Patricians imagined farming as little more than sitting back and gazing over fields of grain and vines heavy with grapes. The elite rarely participated in a rural lifestyle, instead hiring free men or citizens to oversee the slaves who worked the land. Given the Empire stretched over huge areas, with great variety in soil quality and climates, crops could range from the more popular wheat and barley to figs, poppy, or peaches. Over time, advances in irrigation using aqueducts and massive mills allowed more produce to be grown and prepared for the populace. Rome mainly produced wheat, emmer, spelt, barley, grapes, and olives, though much of the wheat necessary for feeding Rome came from Egypt. Cows, sheep, and goats were also raised, utilized for their milk and cheese production, meat, and their hides.

During the Republic, Roman economy centered on trade in grain and wine, largely wheat and unique regional wines. As more regions were conquered, mining in Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Asia Minor also became popular economic endeavors. Hushing and ground sluicing — where diverted streams of water to eroded soil and exposed precious metal ore — were popular methods of mining, allowing metal production in the Empire to soar. While much of this ore was used for the constant development of Rome and other regions, the city also used it for trade. Mining was dangerous work, and the majority of these workers were slaves.

An integral part of the Roman economy, trade was the driving force behind the rapid expansion of the Empire. *Argentarii* acted as bankers and agents, helping to facilitate trade and barter between multiple parties. They maintained strict *tabulae*, or books, used for legal proof of a trade when necessary. In Rome itself, the Forum Cuppedinis was a large market where most general goods could be found. Other large markets specialized in specific goods, but nearly everything could be found at the Forum.

Regions of the Roman Empire conducted trade among themselves; however, many goods intended for the elite of Roman society, such as perfumes, dyes, silk, and spices, were imported from all across the known world. Trade routes along the Tiber River and the port of Ostia offered Rome opportunities to utilize both sea and land routes. Bulk commodities such as grain and construction materials were only shipped via maritime trade routes, due to the low cost of the produce and relatively cheap cost of transportation by sea.

Although barter was common in Rome, and even occasionally used for tax collection purposes, the Empire had a well-developed currency. The government introduced this system in 300 BC, far later than many other southern European locations. Despite this, Romans had familiarity with the use of coin, thanks to trade with the Greeks. Early coins included *aes signatum*, or struck bronze - large tin bronze bars quite unlike any other currency produced at the time. Additionally, the Roman state issued bronze and silver coins depicting mythical scenes or personifications of the gods and goddesses. The committee of *tresviri monetales*, or trio of money men, made decisions regarding what images appeared on the coins. These young statesmen, who aspired to eventually become Senators, conveyed meanings or ideas through the images on the coins. Often, the *tresviri monetales* used imagery from their family or ancestry, or wealthy Patricians paid to have their own desired images used. This imagery was to be seen and used by the elite as the money circulated.

While local authorities could mint bronze coins, the more popular and valuable *denarius* was minted from silver, and authority to create these coins was limited to Rome itself. Rome did this as a means of controlling provinces and ensuring there a common currency existed throughout the Empire. Though the Empire minted many different types of coins, the denarius was the most commonly used.

The following is the exchange rate for coinage at the time:

- *As* – A bronze coin
- *Dupondius* – A brass coin worth two asses
- *Sestertius* – A brass coin worth four asses or two dupondii
- *Denarius* – A silver coin worth four sestertii, eight dupondii, or 16 asses

- *Aureus* – A gold coin worth 25 denarii, 100 sestertii, 200 dupondii, or 400 asses

Banking and coin minting in Rome began in the temples. With constant security at these locations, they were the perfect place for Patricians to store their excess wealth. Often, the elite parceled their money out to various temples, in order to protect their wealth from fire or theft. Over time, the state opened public banking houses known as *Taberae Argentarioe*, allowing Patricians and Plebeians alike to store their money in safe locations. Although these public banking houses became popular, some of the most elite continued to store their wealth in temples.

Among the Patricians, money changed hands on a constant basis. Though the public banking houses rarely offered loans to citizens, private loans were common, even among the elite. Even Caesar himself was forced to request private loans from other wealthy Patricians.

Panem et Circenses – the Arena

Long before the introduction of gladiators and their bloody games, citizens of Ancient Rome enjoyed public events and games. Known as *ludi*, these games were the center of Roman religious festivals. Along with public games, such as horse racing, mock hunts, and theatrical performances, days on which *ludi* opened her gates were public holidays where business transactions were forbidden. Over time, many festivals lost their religious significance, as state leaders used these holidays as a means of distracting citizens from the issues facing Rome.

Though many different kinds of *ludi* existed throughout Rome, gladiator battles were the most violent and well-known. The first gladiatorial games, involving three pairs of gladiators fighting to the death, took place during the First Punic War against Carthage, following the death of Brutus Pera. Drawing inspiration from Campanian funeral rites and frescoes depicting opulently decorated fighters, Decimus Iunius Brutus Scaeva initially introduced the games in honor of his deceased father.

Romans saw these early games as a *munus*, or duty, owed to the *manes*, or souls of deceased loved ones. Unlike the *ludi*, which worshipped a particular deity associated with the religious festival in question, Rome dedicated *munera* to a deceased ancestor chosen by the aristocratic sponsor of the event. Over time, gladiatorial *munera* became commonplace, with many smaller events sponsored by low-ranking officials. Some, however, remained

vast public affairs, such as the munus hosted by Titus Flaminus involving public banquets, artistic performances, and 74 gladiators battling one another. In 105 BCE, a military training program demonstrated barbarian combat styles in the public forums. These training exercises became so popular among citizens that gladiator contests regularly included them in state-sponsored major religious festivals.

At the peak of gladiatorial popularity, the games offered a wide variety of business opportunities. Trainers and owners shared in the winnings of their gladiators, wealthy Patricians sponsored events in lavish shows of self-promotion, and politicians used private and public events to drum up support for future elections. Owning an enslaved gladiator marked one as a true member of the aristocracy, offering political and literal muscle at their disposal. Fearing the potential of vast private armies, the Senate eventually imposed an ownership limit of 640 gladiators, due in large part to the extreme number of combatants owned by Caesar. Although the Senate proposed anti-corruption laws in hopes of curbing the mounting commercialization of the games, these attempts all failed. The popularity of gladiatorial games continued to rise sharply after the attempt on Caesar's life.

Potential gladiators came from any social class; however, they were typically either slaves, criminals, or prisoners of war. The gladiator slave trade was Empire-wide, and carefully supervised by the state. The slaves who found their way to the arena as prisoners of war and had the opportunity to win back their honor and freedom in the games. Young lower-class men and non-citizens enrolled in one of the many gladiatorial schools in exchange for food, housing, and the potential for fame and glory. Some Patricians even found their way to the arena, using the games as a way to garner popularity, though these bouts were typically heavily weighted in their favor. Patricians participating in the games were careful not to accept any payment or compensation for their appearance, as this immediately named them as *infamia*.

Despite Roman views on women, many female gladiators fought throughout the Roman Empire, some of whom became popular. Although no official gladiator school ever opened for women, many found private tutelage through official youth organizations, much like their male counterparts. Romans saw female gladiatorial bout as a rare delicacy at the games, making them some of the most popular matches. Female gladiators fought one another, either in paired combat or larger melees; however, it was not uncommon to see a smaller female gladiator face down a much larger opponent. Though they could participate in any type of gladiator battle, most women mirrored the *Secutores*—a gladiator style favoring heavy armor and

short swords. While participation in the games could name one as infamia, these women enjoyed a great deal of wealth, popularity, and acclaim. Some of the earliest gladiator training schools started to instruct the Roman legion. They became highly effective training facilities for young gladiators.

All prospective gladiators, whether volunteer or condemned, could only join a school if the school's physician deemed them suitable and capable of the rigorous training programs. Once accepted by a school, all gladiators swore a sacred oath binding them into service. Training programs were non-lethal, and focused on teaching trainees various fighting styles and how to die stoically. Although the life and training of a gladiator was grueling, those not condemned as criminals enjoyed a healthy, abundant diet, regular massage, and excellent medical care. Owning a gladiator was a substantial investment, and most wise owners took great care with their property.

As many gladiators originated from foreign lands, combatants utilized a variety of weapons, fighting styles, and armor, allowing them to be easily recognized. Gladiators from two different schools, cultures or traditions faced one another, such as matching heavily armored Samnites against dexterous Laquerarii. Though not all gladiators fell neatly into just one category, most combatants embraced one or more of the following types:

- *Andabatae*: Unlike many types of gladiators, the Andabatae were not trained in schools. They were criminals who were sentenced to death. The arena used these fighters as filler events taking place in the morning or during downtime in the arena. Their only armor was a helmet, which rendered these fighters blind. Andabatae fought to the death, and they often fought in large 'last man standing' type battles, with an arena attendant on hand to swiftly dispatch the injured.
- *Bestiarii*: This classification of gladiator referred to anyone closely connected to the wild animals used in the arena. It referenced not only highly-trained gladiators who specialized in the popular animal fights, but also criminals or prisoners of war ordered to be executed *damnatio ad bestia*. Those who procured, trained, and cared for the animals also fell into this category. Common weapons for Bestiarii included spears, knives, or whips. Armor was basic leather arm and leg wraps, a galea with decorative crests, and the occasional small shield. These fights typically took place in the morning, with both slaves and volunteers trained in this method of combat. The Bestiarii had several subsects, such as the *Paegniarius*, or fighters who faced their animal opponent with only a whip, and the *Venatores*, who hunted down wild game using spears and bows. Venatores were also known for working with the animals and performing tricks.

- *Bustuarii*: The *Bustuarii* were one of the first classes of gladiators, so named for the *bustum*, or funeral pyre of a deceased Roman. These gladiators were slaves purchased for the express purpose of training them to fight to the death at a funeral. They fought with the *gladius graecus*, a leaf-shaped sword that originated in Ancient Greece. They wore no armor, though were allowed a small shield.
- *Cataphractarius*: The heavily armored gladiators of the *Cataphractarius* originated in the cavalry of Germany and Parthia, along with the Sarmatians from Russia and central Asia. These gladiators were completely covered in a heavy armor, and when mounted combat took place, they likewise armored their mounts. The arena paired these combatants with lightly armored gladiators, such as the *Retiarius* or *Dimachaeri*, offering a striking dichotomy between the two fighters. *Cataphractarius* gladiators fought with a *contus*, or long, heavy lance, and wore *lorica squamata*, scale armor laced onto a leather backing.
- *Cestus*: Though some question if *cestus* fighters were truly gladiators, there's no question that this boxing-type fighting style was immensely popular among Roman citizens. Typically, *cestus* fighters wore gloves of the same name, which ranged from simple leather wrappings to elaborate iron gauntlets studded with spikes and blades. They could not use additional weapons or wear armor. Occasionally, these fighters faced other armed gladiators.
- *Dimachaerus*: These gladiators were renowned for their skills with utilizing two swords in combat. The arena armed them with *siccaes*, a short scimitar also favored by the Thracians, and they wore light leather armor to allow for freedom of movement. *Dimachaerus* gladiators were highly skilled and greatly prized as fighters.
- *Eques*: The *Eques* gladiators participated in mounted combat and only fought other *Equites*. The first round of combat for these gladiators involved throwing a light spear or lance. Combatants then dismounted and continued their battle on foot with a *gladius* or *spatha* sword. These gladiators wore a *galea* with feathers, an arm-guard, and carried either a *parma equestris*, or cavalry shield, or a body-shield called a *clipeus*.
- *Essedari*: The *Essedari* gladiators fought from the back of light two-wheeled chariots. These fights were inspired by Celtic warfare, and often re-enacted famous battles. Their weapon of choice was a wooden spear reinforced with iron, along with Celtic-inspired armor such as the Montefortino helmet.
- *Gallus*: Much like the *Cataphractarius* gladiators, the *Gallus* were heavily armed combatants who fought in the Gallic fashion. Though these gladiators originated in Gaul and fought in the games as enslaved prisoners of war, free-born and volunteer gladiators later imitated this style. *Gallus* gladiators wore a *galea* with decorative

crests, a metal greave on their lower left leg, and leather over their right arm. They fought with a gladius or lance, and utilized a *scutum*, or large body shield. As the Gauls integrated into Roman society, this class fell out of style and the arena reformed them as the *Murmillo*.

- *Hoplomachi*: These gladiators originated with the Hellenic Hoplites, though several other heavy fighter types, such as the Samnites, were rolled into this category. The arena often paired Hoplomachi against one another, but occasional bouts set the encumbered combatants against speedier opponents. Hoplomachi preferred to fight with the gladius graecus and a lance called a *hasta*, and wore armor similar to the Gallus.
- *Laquerarii*: The Laquerarii were gladiators who fought with a *laqueus*, or lasso, in one hand, and a bladed weapon in the other. These gladiators wore very little armor to allow for unrestricted movement. Typically, the arena matched them against heavily armored gladiators. The Laquerarii originated in the Retiarii Gladiator group, and they were one of the few types of gladiators who did not wear any kind of helmet.
- *Noxii*: These gladiators were prisoners of war or criminals, pitted against opponents who grossly outclassed them. The arena used them in battles with Sagittarius archers, with little armor or weaponry of their own. They were untrained, and rarely survived their first bout.
- *Provocatores*: The Provocatores were one of the more popular types of gladiatorial battle styles, pitting two highly-trained combatants against one another. Provocatores only fought others of this same class of gladiators, and they were one of the few types who had armor protection on their torso thanks to a small breastplate called a *spongia*. They fought using a gladius, and often utilized a scutum shield. These matches were long-lasting, high-energy bouts between skilled combatants.
- *Retiarii*: These gladiators fought with equipment styled after that of a fisherman. The arena equipped them with a *rete*, or a weighted net, a three-pointed trident called a *fuscina*, and a dagger called a *pugio*. Retiarii had access to multiple fuscina with varying distances between the prongs, which allowed them to perform a number of combat maneuvers such as wrenching a sword from an opponent or stabbing into the eyes of a helmet. Society considered the Retiarii to be most effeminate gladiators, and thus poorly viewed, as they relied on speed and dexterity over brute force. Despite the low status of the Retiarii, the crowds liked them due since they could see their faces.
- *Rudarius*: These rare gladiators earned their freedom, either through winning a set number of combats or by popular vote of the spectators. A gladiator who won their freedom received wooden sword known as a *rudis* as a symbol of their new status. After exiting through the Gate of

Life, a new Rudiarius could choose how they spent their life. Many retired from the games and lived off their winnings, while others elected to work as bodyguards for wealthy citizens. They easily found work in the many gladiatorial schools, or in the arena as an arbiter or referee. Some Rudiarius elected to continue to fight, earning them greater wealth and accolades. Although Rudiarius could not become Roman citizens, their children were eligible for the privilege.

- *Sagittarius*: The Sagittarius were mounted bowmen who typically participated in mock battles, picking off Noxii gladiators from a distance. Due to the danger to spectators, Sagittarius were highly-trained and well-paid fighters. They participated in wild animal hunting shows. Sagittarius wore scale armor and pointed helmets, and they used Parthian short bows.
- *Samnites*: The Samnite fighting style came into popularity after the defeat of Samnium (southern Italy). Like other heavy fighters of the time, Samnites fought with a gladius, with an easily distinguished plume on their helmets. In time, gladiator types, such as the Murrillones, Secutores, and Hoplomachus, evolved from this fighting style.
- *Tertiarius*: These highly-trained gladiators fulfilled several roles in the arena fights. First, the arena often called upon them as a *Suppositicius*, or a substitute for a gladiator unable to fight in the top-billed matches. Additionally, these gladiators participated in the rare fight that required three combatants. In these matches, two Noxii fought to the death, and the survivor faced the Tertiarius.
- *Thraex*: Though Thracian gladiators were one of the first types of gladiators, they did not truly rise to prominence until after they replaced the Gallus. They used a curved sicca and wore light armor with a distinctive griffin on their helmet crest. They were also called *parmulata*, after the small rectangular shield favored by these combatants.
- *Velites*: The Velites were named after a class of Roman infantry, and they fought together in groups against a common enemy. They typically fought with a spear attached to their wrist called a *hasta*, along with a gladius. They were one of the few groups of gladiators who fought without a helmet. Groups of Velites working together were called Catervarii, and they often reenacted battles and faced foes such as chariot riders.

In addition to the Gladiators themselves, numerous people assisted the games in various ways:

- *Editor*: The sponsor financing the gladiatorial games. Although private citizens could sponsor and finance games, the state eventually took ownership of most major events.
- *Lanista*: The owner and trainer of a group of gladiators. They actively participated in the slave trade and rented out their gladiators to editors in need of combatants. Despite the great renown found in the games, upper-class Patricians looked down upon them.
- *Lorarius*: An attendant who whipped reluctant to fight combatants and animals.
- *Paegniarius*: An entertainer who participated in mock battles while gladiators rested between bouts. The arena used them as comic relief, and dressed in overly decorated fake armor.
- *Rudis*: The arena referee or his assistants. These were former gladiators with intimate knowledge of the rules of each game.

Along with the popular combat matches, gladiator games offered special events such as chariot racing — occasionally even using elephants or camels rather than horses — and sea battles. Sea battles were a rare occurrence, typically taking place in a naturally-occurring body of water. In these matches, *Naumacharii* faced one another in mock sea battles. Combatants dressed and armed themselves in imitation of ancient battles. In these vast spectacles, gladiators killed their opponents or drowned in the process. In time, artisans built amphitheaters as to rapidly flood the arena floor, so smaller sea battles could take place within the confines of the city. This required adaptation of the vessels to a smaller, flat-bottomed boat. These battles, while quite impressive, often had huge death tolls, and captives and criminals almost exclusively made up the participants.

As wildly popular public events, the arena advertised gladiator games well in advance, informing spectators of the date and location, number of paired bouts, and event editor, as well as any luxuries available at the event, such as food or door prizes. The games distributed detailed programs on the day of the event, showing the details of each match.

The night before events, the arena threw banquets and parties in honor of the gladiators. This offered all combatants the opportunity to settle their affairs, even the condemned *Noxii*. As the events continued to grow in popularity, Rome constructed large amphitheaters to maximize availability of the games to the populace. The oval shape allowed for all spectators to witness the action, with premium seating afforded to Patricians and the editor of the event. Although people purchased tickets to these events, a lottery system allowed poor citizens the opportunity to attend.

Most munera followed the same standard practices. The games opened with a procession that included images of the gods asked to witness the events, a scribe charged with recording the events, the editor or sponsor of the event, and finally the gladiators themselves. Following the parade, the entertainment began with Bestiarii hunting or fighting wild creatures. This was followed by public executions of Noxii, either through combat or as the subjects of fatal battle reenactments. These bouts granted the Noxii a minimal weapon, to make for a more exciting match. Light-hearted comedy bouts followed these matches — though even these could turn deadly — and trained animals performing tricks. In the afternoon, the main gladiator events started with warm-up bouts involving blunt weapons. At the start of each scheduled match, the editor inspected each weapon. This was an opportunity for the editor to display their affluence, through elaborate weapons and armor provided to the gladiators.

Although the fights appeared chaotic, each match had strict rules which all combatants followed. Referees remained on hand to ensure participants obeyed the rules of the game in question, and a lorarius prodded reluctant gladiators into action. Trained gladiators fought with a certain amount of honor and adhered to professional rules of combat. These experienced gladiators also displayed a certain level of showmanship and stagecraft. The more entertained the crowd, the more likely the loser of the bout was spared.

Matches were often to the death, with the victor receiving a palm branch and an award from the editor of the event. Occasionally, extremely popular fighters received extra gifts or money. A gladiator stopped a match and acknowledged their defeat by lifting a finger, at which point their fate was in the hands of the editor and the crowd. After the crowd expressed their opinion on the fate of the gladiator — death or mercy — the editor made the final decision to spare the fighter or not. Editors rarely went against the will of the crowd, as this could lead to bad business down the road.

Afterward, the organizers threw the bodies of deceased Noxii into rivers, and such a denial of proper funeral rites condemned the spirit. Noxii who performed extraordinarily well could earn funeral rites. Sparing a Noxii was exceedingly rare, even if they won their match. The arena buried professional gladiators in private cemeteries, and gave the bodies of citizens, slaves, and freedmen funeral rites, burying them outside of city limits. The family or lanista of a deceased gladiator financed elaborate memorials, bolstering the reputation and memory of the departed.

Although some gladiators gained a great deal of respect and accolades during their time fighting in the games, few opportunities existed for those

granted their manumission. Although technically freed from their servitude, the infamia of performing as a gladiator remained a roadblock to citizenship or social status.

Reference Material: SPQR: The Legions of Rome

"Without training, they lacked knowledge. Without knowledge, they lacked confidence. Without confidence, they lacked victory."

— Gaius Julius Caesar

Senatus Populusque Romanus, or, 'SPQR' was not only the motto of the legions of Rome, but words they faithfully lived by. Translated, it means, "the Roman Senate and People." Rome conquered the known world, and subjugated her neighbors, while her citizens avidly valued the concept of freedom. SPQR ensured the legions remembered whom they fought for, even if they remained outside of Rome for years, or even decades. This primer is designed as a short introduction to the operation and ranks of the legions of Rome. This section provides enough historical detail to make your *Mystical Rome* story come alive. However, Directors can change a historical fact if doing so makes for a better story.

Citizen Soldiers in the Legions

By tradition, and the law mandated by the Marian Reforms, the moment a legionnaire crossed the Rubicon River, they immediately went on furlough and became a citizen rather than a soldier. These citizens could not wear their armor or bear weapons. This was one of the Republic's most sacred laws, as it prevented any one person from becoming a tyrant and seeking a kingship of their own.

During the Civil War of the Republic, Pompey fled Rome with his legions and the Imperator closed off the city with the Thirteenth Legion. The Imperator later passed a law through the Senate, and approved it as Consul, that the Thirteenth Legion served as their Praetorian Guard. The only other places in Rome where legionnaires could wear armor and bear their legion standard was on the Fields of Mars or during a Triumph.

Writer's Room Commentary: Legionnaires Within the Eternal City

The average legionnaire served for a decade or more in the provinces, or wherever the Senate sent them. Patricians and highly ranked Plebeians often took furloughs back to Rome to take care of important family business or local matters. These legionnaires brought their cohorts, who served as bodyguards and returned to their own families with spoils of war. If you want to play a legionnaire and the plot was centered within the boundaries of the

Eternal City, adjust the backstories as needed.

Structure of a Legion

A battle-ready Roman legion was at full strength once it reached six thousand soldiers. On a more practical level, through the attrition of war, combat, diseases, and logistical needs, a legion operated as low as five thousand fighting legionnaires, including officers. While serving within a legion, soldiers had many different jobs, but everyone, from the officers to field surgeons to clerks, fought when the horns sounded.

The basic structure of the legion was as follows:

- *Contubernium*: A group of eight soldiers, who fought, marched, and slept as a unit.
- *Centuria*: A collection of 10 contubernium (80 soldiers), overseen by a single centurion and their *opios*. The 'century' was often considered the basic unit of the legion.
- *Cohorts* (cohort): Included 6 centuriae, or a total of 480 fighting soldiers, not including officers. In addition, the first cohort of a legion was double strength, comprising 1000 fighting legionnaires, but with only 5 centuriae instead of the normal 6.
- *Eques Legionis*: Cavalry cohort of 120 soldiers, used as scouts and messengers.

The basic organization of 10 cohorts was the same throughout all the legions. Their leaders arranged them in battle so the strongest and weakest units were mixed throughout the formation, maximizing morale and effectiveness.

The culture of each cohort was unique and storied. The First Optio kept a living history and memory of past triumphs (even if the events were hundreds of years old), famous battles the unit participated in, and overall maintained the *esprit de corps*. For example, the Third Cohort of the Seventh Legion claimed they helped Aeneas himself escape the custody of the Carthaginian Queen Dido, and later participated in the Punic Wars. While more than a few honest historians placed doubt on certain historical impossibilities happening before the founding of Rome, none doubted the tradition of this cohort toasting Queen Dido upon seeing the shores of Africa.

Roman Legionary Ranks

A legion was a traveling civilization. Many of their ranks were similar to those of a large kingdom. Some of them had nothing to do with the actual fighting, but instead focused on the management of resources. The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but offers a high-level overview from the highest ranks to most common soldier:

Legatus Legionis

The *legatus* was the supreme commander of the legion, appointed directly by the Imperator or via a majority vote of the Senate. Technically, the duration of service was four years, but in times of emergency or due to personal political ambition, an officer kept their rank for up to a decade. The legate was ultimately responsible for the legion and its behavior before the Senate. A small number of tribunes served the legate, empowered to speak and act in their stead.

From the times of the Roman Republic, legates received large shares of the military's rewards at the end of a successful campaign. This made the position a lucrative one, so it often attracted even distinguished consuls or other high-ranking political figures. The men who filled the office of legate came from the Senatorial class of Rome. Two main positions existed: the *legatus legionis* was an ex-praetor given command of one of Rome's elite legions, while the *legatus pro praetore* was an ex-consul given the governorship of a Roman province, with the magisterial powers of a praetor—which in some cases included command of four or more legions. A *legatus* was entitled to twelve *lictors*, who carried out punishments with fasces (bundled rods).

This office sometimes served other functions for Rome. In smaller provinces, without an official governor, the legate acted as governor, with all of the office's powers and authorities. A number of tribunes served in this office. If there wasn't an anointed general in charge of an upcoming battle (commanding multiple legions), then the legate planned the overall strategy of a battle, as well as how their individual units acted to meet the requirements of the battle plan.

Tribunus Laticlavus

Named for the broad striped toga worn by men of senatorial rank, the Emperor or the Senate appointed this tribune. Although generally quite young and less experienced than the *Tribuni Angusticlavii*, they served as second in command of the legion, behind the legate. This gave experience to young Patricians on their way to becoming Senators during the *Cursus Honorum*.

Praefectus Castrorum

This *Praefectus Castrorum* was the recognized, senior veteran of the legion, promoted through the ranks of the centurions. Nominally, this prefect was third in command of the unit, but all command orders came from them. This position always led from the front line to boost confidence in the soldiers.

Tribuni Angusticlavii

Each legion had five military tribunes—career officers who fulfilled many of the important administrative tasks of the Legion, but still served in a full tactical command function during engagements. They worked at the direction of the Prefect and maintained the operation of the legion via clothing, feeding, and arming it. In addition, they guarded the morale and acted as the voices of the ground troops to speak legitimate concerns.

Lesser Officers in the Roman Legion

There were a number of lesser officers in a legion:

Primus Pilus

This officer was the commanding centurion of the first cohort and the senior centurion of the entire legion. This position was the most respected in the entire legion. To achieve this rank, the centurion earned their honor in blood, during battle.

Centurion

The *Centurions* were the backbone of the professional army, serving as the career soldiers who made up the commanders of the *centuria*. These field officers conveyed battle orders so their units followed the battle plan.

Principales

The *principales* were the equivalent of modern-day non-commissioned officers, and had the following rank structures, from highest to lowest:

- Aquilifer: A single position within the legion. The *aquilifer* was the legion's standard, or eagle, bearer. Aquilifer was an enormously important and prestigious position, and the next step up was a post as a Centurion. Society called those who held such positions "Heroes of the Legion."
- Signifer: A *signifer* was responsible for the men's pay and savings. They were also standard bearer for the *Centurial Signum*, a spear shaft decorated with medallions and often topped with an open hand to signify the oath of loyalty taken by the soldiers. Men from each individual centuria rallied behind this banner during critical moments in battle; and it gave solace during times of low morale while on the road. Many considered it a sign of the Republic herself, and therefore a soldier gained the position of *discentes signiferorum*, or standard bearer-in-training, if they showed bravery on the field of battle.
- Optio: Each centurion had three executive officers called *Optios* who served as the sergeant-of-arms for the centurion. They maintained the overall morale of the unit, took care of administrative details below their commander's notice, and delegated tasks to the rest of the non-commissioned offices of the legion.
- Tesserarius: Optios had three *Tesserarius*, non-commissioned officers who enforced discipline within the ranks, served as night watch commanders, and ensured their units were ready for battle at a moment's notice. Those who held this rank were the strongest fighters in the unit.
- Cornicen (Horn blower): These bold soldiers worked closely with the signifer, drawing the attention of the men to the *Centurial Signum*, and conveying the officers' commands to the frontline fighters. The

enemy often first targeted them as they were something of a mascot for the legion.

- **Imaginifer:** This soldier stood with the *Cornicen* to carry the standard bearing the image of the Emperor, a constant reminder of the legion's loyalty to them. Serving as the imaginifer was a great honor; although if this soldier fell in battle, Caesar himself demanded to know why.

The Rank and File Legionnaires in the Roman Legion

There were a number of designations for the rank and file legionaries:

- **Immunes:** These were trained specialists, such as surgeons, engineers, surveyors, architects, and craftsmen. They were exempt from normal camp and hard labor duties due to the nature of their work, and generally earned slightly more pay than the Milites.
- **Milites:** The basic, grunt legionnaire foot soldier, one who completed their training and was ready to fight.
- **Tirones:** A recruit taught and hazed into the legion, which could take up to six months depending on the needs of the moment. During peacetime, a cohort extended this term of service to a year.

Crime and Punishment in the Roman Legion

The punishments for legionnaires were harsh:

- **Scourging:** If a soldier disobeyed an order, engaged in public drunkenness, or minor offence, the *Opios* scourged them.
- **Strangling:** Superior officers strangled soldiers convicted by their cohort of stealing.
- **Crucifixion:** Leaders crucified soldiers who deserted their units or showed extreme cowardice in battle.
- **Decimation:** If an entire cohort was judged guilty of a capital crime—such as cowardice, mutiny, desertion, and insubordination— leadership offered the unit this punishment as a way to redeem their honor. They divided the unit into groups of ten. Each group drew lots, and the legionnaire who drew the shortest of the straws was horribly executed by their nine comrades. The bivouac

required the survivors to remain outside the fortified security of the camp for thirty days until they rejoined the legion. As the punishment fell by lot, all soldiers in a group sentenced to decimation were up for execution, regardless of individual degrees of fault, rank, or distinction.

A Walking Civilization and Culture

Each legion was a walking, breathing city, with thousands of citizens and a living memory stretching back to the time of Romulus' reign. This brotherhood was unique, even among other legions, as each had traditions, maintained and upheld by the centurions and their optios. Legions considered other legions to be their distant brothers, which led to intense rivalries, especially during the time of the Civil Wars. The Emperor purposely reassigned cohorts from the legions of their enemies, such as Pompey Magnus, Gaius Cassius Longinus, and Marcus Junius Brutus. This stemmed personal conflicts, but the tribal memory of going to war against other legions faded slowly. It was twenty years later that a sense of unity returned.

An Insidious Method of Conquest

The legions were historically unique in their design not only to fight and conquer, but to transform the culture of the conquered territory to be closer to that of Rome. Popular legend had it that the first thing a legion did upon stabilizing their control over an area was to build a proper Roman-style bath. The legions paved roads from conquered lands, called provinces in Rome's Empire, and then immediately began improvements via public works such as constructing aqueducts, repairing damaged buildings, and building baths. They immediately encouraged trade between locals and the merchants of Rome, hungry for new markets. The provinces quickly prospered under Roman rule. Legionnaire governors returned most, if not all, of the local control back into those deemed most loyal to Rome.

Marian Reforms

The Marian Reforms were the driving force behind the establishment of the Roman Empire. Before, whenever war or military action threatened Rome, consuls recruited their army from among the eligible citizenry. The Marian reforms expanded the definition of an eligible citizen. Those could not previously serve in the legions due to their social class received permission to do so. Prior to the reforms, those eligible for military service

were landowners and taxpayers, who supplied their own armaments when drafted. Gaius Marius, for whom the reforms were justifiably named, changed this requirement to allow those without land to become professional soldiers, with the Roman state supplying their basic arms and armor in exchange for service. While previous disasters and losses forced these changes to allow Rome to continue its conquests, they were the primary reason behind the rise of a Roman Emperor.

The second and third reforms were arguably the more drastic changes. Before the Marian Reforms, all Roman armies were volunteer armies, assembled as needed and then released back to civilian life after the battles concluded. Marius was the junior consul who first established a standing army. The state required these professional soldiers to serve a sixteen-year term of service, then contribute an additional five years to the reserves.

These legions ate, slept, trained, and lived with their units for the length of their service. Even without an active war or conflict, they remained soldiers until their service expired. After completion of their terms, soldiers received a reward of land granted by Rome in conquered areas not yet firmly brought under control. Having retired legionaries as land owners on the borders increased both the safety and authority of Rome.

Along with the legislation permitting a standing army, Marius reformed the structure of what became the standard legion. Their revisions allowed a standard legion size of roughly six thousand men to remain functional. One thousand support staff guided five thousand legionnaires, each cohort self-contained, while carrying all their arms, equipment, and supplies together as a unit. The army dispatched these highly mobile units to troubled areas at a moment's notice.

Finally, the last reform made way for allies to achieve full Roman citizenship, through service in the legion. This reform further expanded the pool of soldiers available to conquer new territories and defend those provinces already under Roman rule.

The Triumph

A Triumph was a formal civil ceremony and religious rite held to publicly celebrate and sanctify the success of a military commander who led Roman forces to victory in a foreign war. To convey their near-divine status, the commander wore a crown of laurels with an all-purple toga embroidered with gold. They

painted their face with the blood of their enemy to promote their victory. Republican morality required, despite these extraordinary honors, the general conduct himself with dignified humility, as a mortal citizen who triumphed on behalf of Rome. Inevitably, however, the Triumph offered extraordinary opportunities for self-publicity, besides its religious and military dimensions.

The commander, riding a four-horse chariot, led their legions, their captives, and the spoils of war on a long, winding procession through the city to the temple of Capitoline Jupiter under the gaze of their peers and an applauding crowd. Once at the temple, they sacrificed two white oxen and laid tokens of their victory at Jupiter's feet, dedicating their victory to the Roman Senate, people, and gods. The Imperator made a great show after their conquering of Gaul, and won the loyalty of the Plebeians by giving away nearly half their plunder. Subsequent commanders were held to the same standard, lest they be shamed.

The traditional procession mustered in the open space of the Fields of Mars just before dawn, and then entered the city through the Porta Triumphalis, crossed the pomerium, and then continued through the Circus Flaminius. The Triumph entered the Via Sacra, then the Forum, and finally arrived at the Capitoline Hill, the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Triumphal processions were notoriously long and slow, as the citizens of Rome continually stopped the parade to ask for a blessing or to give the procession wreaths and gifts of wine and cakes. Once they completed the sacrifice and dedications, the procession and spectators dispersed to banquets, games, and other entertainments sponsored by the triumphing general.

Reference Material: Gods and Men – Pagan Rome

"Religion was regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful."

— Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Rome was like many modern cities; its streets filled with busy travelers and traders from all over the known world, as well as migrants brought in from conquered peoples. Its infrastructure was resplendent in its modernity, with many scientific advances moving Rome from the limitations of the past and into the wonders of the future. Despite all of this, however, Roman culture

heavily involved magic and superstition. Slave or free, Plebeian or Patrician — all people prayed. The vast majority of them prayed, at least a bit, to the gods of the Roman state religion.

At the time of Caesar, the state religion had roots in Greek and Sabine mythology, along with Etruscan augury practices. With each new conquered people, the Romans incorporated pieces of their religious practices and mythology into the state religion, making assimilation into the Roman society easier for these new cultures. The Romans folded many gods from other cultures into existing Roman deities, and worship continued uninterrupted and relatively unimpeded. By doing this, the Roman Empire retained the piety of both its citizens and those it conquered, generating no small amount of pride.

For *Mystical Rome*, the immense complexity of the Roman state religion is streamlined for incorporation into stories where religion is a constant backdrop. Nonetheless, a wealth of material is available should Directors and players decide to include more of the state religion in their stories. Despite this simplification, the main characters of stories should have one or more gods they favor. Regardless of their profession, characters curry the favor of the gods in multiple ways, either through direct supplication or by paying the priests and priestesses who make worship their life's work.

The Dii Consentes

Over 20 gods and goddesses enjoyed prominent places in Rome's pantheon. However, the twelve gods and goddesses with direct Greek counterparts, known as the *Dii Consentes*, roughly translated, "Council of the Gods", received the lion's share of Roman devotion. Statues of the twelve gods lined the Forum, and no Roman living in the city could leave their house without seeing a depiction of one or more of these gods. Three gods — Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva — formed the Capitoline Triad, and held a central place as patron deities of Rome herself.

God: Jupiter

Symbol: Lightning Bolt

Appropriate Sacrifice: White ox (castrated bull)

Description: Jupiter was King of the Gods, the god of the sky, and the leader all other gods obeyed. He was the youngest son of Saturn and Ops, and the brother of Neptune, Pluto, Vesta, Ceres, and Juno. Jupiter married his sister Juno and had many children, with Mars and Vulcan most notably joining their divine parents in the Dii Consentes. Jupiter was the patron god of Rome, and the chief deity of the state religion.

His symbol was the lightning bolt and the eagle his animal. Portrayals often combined these two symbols, with Jupiter represented as an eagle holding a lightning bolt in its claws. Roman coins featured this symbol. In addition, the Roman army adopted his eagle as their symbol, representing their allegiance to Rome.

Jupiter, as the sky god, was the divine witness to oaths: the sacred trusts on which justice and good government depended. Under his watchful eye, those who swore oaths for any purpose were honor-bound to keep them, lest they invoke Jupiter's ire. The leaders of Rome, from its earliest kings to consuls of the Republic to Caesar himself, swore oaths to Jupiter upon taking office.

Goddess: Juno

Symbol: Peacock

Appropriate Sacrifice: White sow or lamb

Description: Juno was Queen of the Gods: the wife and sister of Jupiter; daughter of Saturn and Ops; and the sister of Neptune, Pluto, Ceres, and Vesta. Her children included Mars and Vulcan. Juno was known as the protector of Rome's women and the patron goddess of Rome. Her animal and symbol were the peacock, and iconography often depicted her in a warlike pose, usually wielding a spear and wearing a goatskin cloak.

Juno was the goddess of marriage. However, she was also tied to many other aspects of traditional femininity, such as pregnancy, childbirth, fertility, and menstrual cycles. Rome devoted the Kalends, the first day of the month, to Juno for this reason. Juno's purview firmly included the fierce protectiveness of mothers over their children and women for other women.

As Queen of the Gods, Juno asserted a place in politics as an embodiment of the "soft power" women leveraged when the law forbade them to take office. Many wives and mistresses of politicians or high-ranked generals prayed to Juno so their partners heard their counsel, for the sake of influencing policy in the city of Rome and throughout the Empire. Juno's role as a fertility goddess also placed her in

a position of overseeing the health and wealth of the community.

Goddess: Minerva

Symbol: Owl

Appropriate Sacrifice: White virgin calf

Description: Minerva was the virgin goddess of poetry, medicine, wisdom, strategic warfare, commerce, weaving, and crafts. As a patron of arts, trade, and strategy, Minerva appealed to those concerned with the material and economic health of Rome. The reverse side of various coins featured Minerva holding an owl and spear. Intellectuals and merchants alike worshipped her, appealing to her for good fortune in their pursuits. In addition, Romans deified her as a goddess of medicine and physicians.

Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter and Metis, a Titan. When Jupiter discovered Metis' pregnancy, he tricked Metis into becoming a fly through a shapeshifting game and ate her. Metis remained living inside Jupiter's head, where she gave birth to a daughter and fashioned armor for her. The hammering caused Jupiter excruciating headaches. When Vulcan split open his father's skull to alleviate the pain, Minerva sprang from Jupiter as an adult, wearing the armor her mother crafted for her. Some stories say that Metis remained in Jupiter's head and whispered wisdom to him.

On the instances that Minerva was armed with a sword in her role as the goddess of defensive war and strategy, she lowered her sword in sympathy for those killed by warfare and violence. Mars, the god of aggressive war and conquest, was her rival.

God: Neptune

Symbol: Trident

Appropriate Sacrifice: White bull

Description: Neptune was the brother of Jupiter, Pluto, Juno, Vesta, and Ceres, and the god of springs, lakes, rivers, and the sea. In images, Neptune rode a seahorse-drawn chariot in water, holding a trident. The trident controlled the waters as Neptune saw fit.

Neptune's purview also included horses, as Neptune created these, while both Neptune and Minerva created the

chariot. The oldest temple to Neptune in Rome was located near the Circus Flaminius, the Roman racetrack, and chariot racers provided sacrifices both before and after important races. Neptune and Ceres sired Arion, a legendary racehorse endowed with human speech, while both transformed themselves into horses.

Travelers prayed to Neptune for safe and easy journeys, whether they went by land or sea. His violent mood swings were also legendary. Frequently consumed by lust, Neptune threw himself on both women and men, whether these partners consented or not. Neptune's fits of rage caused ocean storms and earthquakes, so prayers and sacrifices helped ease his temper.

Goddess: Venus

Symbol: Myrtle

Appropriate Sacrifice: White dove

Description: Venus was, quite literally, the divine mother of the Roman people. Aeneas, the ancestor of the brothers Romulus and Remus, was the son of Venus and the Trojan prince Anchises. According to Ovid, Venus came to Rome because she, "preferred to be worshipped in the city of her own offspring." In Rome, she was the goddess of love, beauty, fertility, sex, desire, and prosperity, as well as the patron of prostitutes. She received glory after military victories because of her role in Rome's divine origins.

Venus' symbol, myrtle, appeared frequently in Roman life. Roman wine contains myrtle oil, and myrtle was an aphrodisiac. Brides prayed to Venus before their weddings, with some sacrificing their childhood toys in the process. Wedding bouquets included roses and myrtle, to inspire love and give Venus a place in the marriage—but never above the jealous Juno.

Venus had many consorts. Jupiter promised Venus to his son, Vulcan, to prevent undue discord. However, Venus consorted with Mars and Mercury, and myths arose from her dalliances with the mortal shepherd Adonis and the Trojan prince Anchises. Many women saw Venus' sexual freedom as refreshing in the face of equally promiscuous male gods.

God: Mars

Symbol: Spear

Appropriate Sacrifice: White bull

Description: As Venus was the mother of Rome, Mars was its father as his son Romulus laid out the city's walls.

Some said Mars was the son of Jupiter and Juno. However, according to Ovid, Mars was the son of Juno alone, who gave birth to him without Jupiter in retaliation for the birth of Minerva. Mars was a god of war, and an integral aspect of Rome's expansion. However, he also acted as a patron of agriculture through the sheer force of his own virility. After all, an army marched on its stomach. Soldiers and farmers alike prayed to him for abundance and success.

Iconography depicted Mars naked, with the exception of helmet, spear and shield. When portrayed clothed, he wore full military regalia. Many soldiers dreamt of Mars on the battlefield with them, riding a chariot, with a spear extended toward the enemy in one hand and a bloodied sword in the other.

Mars had contentious relationships with many other gods. While Venus married Vulcan, she carried on a standing love affair with Mars. Mars and Minerva were rivals, not only due to the nature of their respective births, but in their contrasting places in warfare. Minerva represented methodic, defensive strategy, while Mars was the embodiment of aggression and the heat of battle.

God: Apollo

Symbol: Lyre

Appropriate Sacrifice: White goat or steer

Description: Apollo was the god of music, poetry, art, oracles, the sun, healing, and shepherds. The oracle at Delphi enjoyed specific attention and blessings from Apollo, and the earliest kings of Rome, ruling before the Republic, went to Delphi to seek the oracle's wisdom. People associated Apollo with light and the thwarting of evil, which attracted additional prayers and devotion from those in danger. Apollo was almost wholly a Greek god, with very little changing as the Romans adopted him.

Apollo and his twin, Diana, were born to Jupiter and Latona, the daughter of two Titans. Even in the womb,

Apollo demonstrated the gift of prophecy. Juno grew jealous of Latona and took as many steps as she could to prevent the birth. Through trickery from Jupiter and the prophecies Apollo whispered to his mother, Latona managed to deliver the twins anyway. When Apollo emerged from the womb, he declared himself the interpreter of Jupiter's will on earth.

In *Mystical Rome*, Apollo shows no gender preference in his lovers, leading many non-heterosexual Romans to keep a statue of Apollo in their lararia at home. Apollo had a feminine appearance, while his sister Diana displayed more masculine traits. As a result, transgender individuals pay special homage to the Twins.

Goddess: Diana

Symbol: Bow and Arrow

Appropriate Sacrifice: Spoils of the hunt

Description: Diana was the goddess of the moon, fertility cycles, the hunt, and wild animals. She held sway over both the wild woodlands, in which hunters stalked dangerous prey, and the tamer countryside, where more docile animals lived. Diana also protected women in labor and childbirth, overlapping her purview with Juno. Romans depicted her in a short tunic, short boots, and tied-back hair, while wielding a bow with a quiver of golden arrows. Her depictions also featured hunting dogs or deer.

Diana existed among the tribes who came before the kingdom of Rome, but as Greek influence spread, her identity merged with that of the Greek goddess Artemis. In the more Hellenistic tradition, Diana and her twin Apollo, were born to the titans Jupiter and Latona.

Diana vowed never to marry, along with Minerva and Vesta. However, many queer Roman women did not believe this ruled out taking female lovers. As a result, shrines to Diana appeared in their lararia.

God: Vulcan

Symbol: Anvil

Appropriate Sacrifice: Red goat

Description: Vulcan was the god of fire, volcanoes, deserts, metal work, and the forge. His parents were Jupiter and Juno. Vulcan was depicted holding a

blacksmith's hammer, emphasizing the creative forces of fire. Smiths honored him to keep their fires hot and the fruits of their labor strong. Vulcan acted as the smith for the gods, making art, arms, jewelry, and armor for them, including Jupiter's lightning bolts. However, Romans did not ignore Vulcan's association with the destructive nature of fire. As a result, his temple laid outside the boundaries of the original city, to mitigate the risks from fire caused by Vulcan.

In borrowed Greek myth, Vulcan was born small and ugly with a red face, which caused Juno to cast him down from Mount Olympus. He fell to earth for a day and a night, breaking his leg when he landed, from which the young god never recovered. As he matured, he grew into a talented blacksmith, and Jupiter lured Vulcan back to his rightful place among the gods by promising him Venus as a wife. Whenever Venus was unfaithful, fire and heat erupted from his forge underneath Mount Aetna, a known active volcano.

Goddess: Vesta

Symbol: Hearth

Appropriate Sacrifice: Any burnt offering

Description: Vesta was the daughter of Saturn and Ops, as well as the sister to Jupiter, Juno, Pluto, and Ceres. She was the goddess of hearth, home, and family. While all of the other Dii Consentes had their thrones crafted by Vulcan, Vesta did not. Instead, she had a small stool where she tended the sacred fire of the gods. Some myths claimed she gave up her throne for Bacchus, the youngest of the gods. However, Vesta preferred to avoid the squabbles and arguments of the other Gods, choosing to let them have their way over petty matters more often than not. Few artists depicted Vesta herself; instead, images of the hearth, the fire stick, and the fascinus, a ritual phallus, represented her.

Vesta was a virgin goddess, along with Minerva and Diana. However, Romans also associated Vesta with motherhood in her role as a goddess of the home and family, due to the phallic nature of the fire stick and its use to spark a flame. In various Roman legends, sacred phalluses with

miraculous properties appear in hearths dedicated to Vesta.

In Rome, the temple to Vesta was off-limits to all except the Vestal Virgins, Rome's only full-time, exclusively female, religious order. When Romans presented burnt offerings to other gods, Vesta always received a share, even if she was not directly petitioned.

God: Mercury

Symbol: Caduceus

Appropriate Sacrifice: Male goat

Description: Mercury was the god of financial gain, trade, eloquence, communication, travel, trickery, and thieves. He was the son of Jupiter and Maia, a daughter of the Titan Atlas. Mercury frequently guided others and their messages from one realm to another, such as the gods from their realm to Earth, and dead souls from Earth to the underworld. He delivered these messages directly, as he did not communicate through oracles. Images depicted Mercury wearing winged sandals and a winged helmet. He held a caduceus, gifted to him from Apollo, or a lyre, which Mercury invented from a tortoise shell. Mercury, along with Minerva, appeared on various denominations of coins. Merchants prayed for profitable ventures, travelers asked for swift and easy journeys, and politicians wanted to speak the correct words for swaying their peers.

Curiously, Mercury enjoyed immense popularity with Celtic and Germanic tribes, especially in Gaul. His association with trade and communication made it easy for Mercury to have multiple "interpretations" among those conquered people, which suited the fluid nature of the god. In some myths, Mercury was also the father of the first Lares, minor guardian gods who protected a specific space, such as a home.

Goddess: Ceres

Symbol: Cornucopia

Appropriate sacrifice: Sow

Description: Ceres was the goddess of agriculture, grain, fertility, and motherhood. She was the daughter of Saturn and Ops, and sister to Jupiter, Juno, Pluto, and Vesta. Rome credited Ceres for many of the advances in

agricultural technology, such as the cultivation of spelt, yoking oxen for ploughing, and sowing seeds for growing crops. As a result, humanity settled instead of scavenging lawlessly, leading eventually to the Roman civilization itself. Ceres set forth laws to govern the harvest, which earned her the epithet "the Lawgiver," and granted her special purview over the edicts of Rome. Ceres was a patron and protector of Plebeian law and Tribunes, watching over the common people when the Patricians' reach exceeded their grasp. Images of Ceres depicted her with twelve helper gods, each governing an aspect of agriculture, such as ploughing, planting, weeding, reaping, and treatments of grain once harvested.

Ceres' daughter, Proserpina, was the consort of Pluto. Her daughter's passing from Earth to the underworld marked the seasons, as Ceres mourned the absence of her daughter. When Pluto took Proserpina, pigs trampled the ground and hampered Ceres' search for her daughter. She still enjoys their sacrifice in her honor a little too much.

Other Gods

Romans were never picky in those they chose to worship. For them, religion was another pathway to seek success, and after praying to any one of the major gods, they also sought the favor of a lesser one who suited their purposes. Sometimes these gods and goddesses found themselves the center of worship for cults or families, especially those dedicated to their specialty and area of expertise.

- **Bacchus:** The god of the grape harvest, wine, and revelry, Bacchus was the youngest of the gods, and the only one with a mortal mother. His followers drove themselves into an ecstatic frenzy as part of their rites, using both drink and dancing.
- **Pluto/Dis Pater:** The god of mineral wealth from underground and the Underworld, Pluto ruled over the dead. Conflated with an older god, Orcus, Pluto also oversaw the punishment of oath breakers. Pluto courted Proserpina, but Ceres refused to allow the match. Defying her mother, Proserpina staged her own abduction, and chose to eat the food of the Underworld, tying her to that realm for half the year. Pluto and Proserpina perhaps had the most functional marriage out of all the gods.

- **Proserpina:** The daughter of Ceres, Proserpina was Queen of the Underworld. Worshippers conflated her with Libera, an earlier goddess of agriculture and freedom. When Jupiter and Ceres negotiated for her return to Earth, Proserpina admitted to eating the food of the dead, which forced her to divide her time between the living world and the Underworld.
- **Quirinus:** An early god of the Roman state religion, Quirinus was the deification of Romulus, the founder of Rome.
- **Janus:** The god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, doorways, passages, and endings, Janus bore two faces to look toward both the past and the future. Janus also oversaw both war and peace.
- **Tellus:** The earth mother, Tellus (later Terra) shared many festivals with Ceres. A darker aspect of Tellus was as one of the mothers of the first Lares.

Gods and The People

Romans had a highly practical view of their relationship with the gods, summed up in a brief, but concise phrase: *do ut des*, or, "I give that you might give." For all their sacrifices, offerings, and libations to the gods, the Roman people genuinely expected grace and divine favor in return, as well as prosperity which led to a cycle of further sacrifices and additional reciprocated goodwill. As a result of this transactional approach, Rome's people were markedly indifferent towards the suffering of their own. Vengeful gods punished those who behaved badly or lacked faith through individual misfortune.

Faith & Belief

To a Roman, the question, "Do you believe in god?" was ridiculous. The Romans believed in *all* gods. Every time they conquered a new culture, soldiers brought the effigy of their mother goddess to Rome and added it to Jupiter's harem. Such belief did not function the way modern people understand faith, though. Neptune was as present as the sea, and making an offering to him before boarding a ship was a safety precaution akin to putting on a life vest. To put it another way – Roman religion didn't require true belief, only that participants performed the proper sacrifices in the correct manner to ensure the Roman state prospered. This belief fueled their conflict with a semi-nomadic tribe in the province of Judea, whose strict monotheism the Romans viewed with suspicion. Their obstinate refusal to

simply say the right words in the right order was, to a Roman, subversion bordering on treason.

Romans honored their gods through prayer and offerings, and considered prayers potent in their own right, though an offering was worthless without the appropriate prayer. Offerings were as simple as pouring a cup of wine in front of a household shrine, or offering food fallen to the floor at a family meal. More complex offerings included animals, While Romans declared human sacrifices part of barbaric practices of those they conquered, they dedicated much of the bloodshed in the arena to the gods. Sacrifices made as part of public rituals had exacting specifications. The temples offered varying levels of access to the general public, and included statues and altars available for the masses to leave offerings of incense and libations. Priests and priestesses used deeper interior chambers of the temples for residences or spaces for private ritual.

Public religious ritual had no room for mistakes. If a mistake occurred, the ceremony, or even the entire festival, restarted from the beginning. Even private prayer by an individual was formulaic. While the individual praying chose a prayer for a particular purpose or occasion, the prayer was more recitation or incantation than personal communion with the divine.

A variety of smaller rituals tied into the life events of every Roman. The *dies natalis* was the Roman equivalent of a modern birthday. The *dies lustricus*, eight or nine days after birth (when the child's survival was more assured), included a gift of a protective amulet, one cast aside when the child came of age. Marriages and funerals also incorporated multiple religious ritual elements.

Holy Days

Forty different religious festivals, or *feriae*, speckled the Roman calendar. Some lasted several days, which meant most days had religious significance. While some festivals only required the participation of priests in the appropriate rites, many others incorporated games, such as chariot races or theater performances. By Caesar's time, this included gladiatorial combat.

Romans separated *feriae* into public and private, and then into festivals with concrete dates, feasts with moveable dates, and others held on demand, as the needs of the people dictated. Priests performed religious rites on the *feriae*, and the state suspended public business. Society discouraged citizens and free people from engaging in lawsuits and quarrels, and even asked slave owners to grant their slaves respite. The state excluded specific agricultural tasks from these expectations out of necessity, and other tasks were performed if a sacrifice of atonement was made in advance.

Due to the high number of sacred days, practicality resulted in people working on forbidden days. Those who "inadvertently" worked paid a fine or offered up an atonement sacrifice, usually a pig. Rome excused work considered vital either to the gods or preserving human life. Certain festivals that took place over multiple days also required that other ceremonies could not occur. For example, during the *Parentalia*, when Romans venerated dead, weddings were forbidden.

Ancestor Worship

Ancestry was of deep importance to the Romans, especially among the elite families. The noted deeds and accomplishments of their forbears inspired many Patricians to offer veneration in exchange for guidance and good fortune, as they strove to be worthy of their own remembrance by future generations.

The *Manes*, or *Di Manes*, were the deified spirits of the dead and considered benevolent, even if they required appropriate appeasement. These spirits received blood sacrifices through the gladiatorial games. Gravestones frequently had the letters *D.M.*, *Diis Manibus*, with the aspiration that the deceased might join the *Manes*. Some believed *Manes* could become *Lares*, actively protecting their descendants.

A noble Roman family displayed ancestral images in the *tablinum*, the room where the *paterfamilias* took care of household matters. In this way, the *paterfamilias* was directly reminded of the family's legacy when making important decisions. The ancestral images displayed included busts, paintings, and wax funeral masks. These masks, modeled from the faces of the deceased, were part of the funeral procession when elite Romans died, usually worn by professional mourners.

The month of February was of particular importance for appeasing and venerating dead ancestors, for Patricians and Plebeians alike. During the festival of the Parentalia, which began on February 13th, a family honored its ancestors by visiting the cemetery. During these visits, the family shared cake and wine, both as offerings to the dead and a meal among themselves. The Parentalia concluded on February 21st with the Feralia, a public festival where Romans made sacrifices and offerings to the Manes.

Household Gods

Rome had several types of household gods: the *Lares* (singular: *Lar*), who served as guardians of a specific space; the *Di Penates*, who presided over the household provisions; and the *genii* (singular: *genius*), the divine sparks in people, places, or objects.

The Lares were guardians of specific spaces, such as individual homes. Romans worshipped them not in elaborate temples, as the Dii Consentes or other gods, but instead created small household shrines known as *lararia* (singular: *lararium*) to honor the Lares. The Lares did not have individual names, with one sole exception: Mater Larum, mother of the first Lares. Her origin story varied, from a former nymph impregnated by Mercury to a dark aspect of the earth-mother Tellus. Overall, Romans believed Lares were benevolent ancestor spirits who guarded the home.

The Di Penates watched over the *penus*, or storeroom for household provisions. During family meals, families threw a small portion of food into the heart fire in deference to the Penates. Rome herself venerated the Penates, with the state as a whole worshipping the Penates Publici, who watched over the city's granaries and storerooms. To the Romans, this worship ensured the city always had enough for its citizens, although the gods answered with varying degrees of bounty.

The genius-figure of a household represented its general spirit, the anthropomorphic embodiment of the household itself. Every person, place, or thing had a genius, from the lowliest gate in the city to the largest Imperial Legion. Genii also represented more abstract concepts, such as the Roman state, love, victory, marriage, or purity.

The lararium in a traditional Roman household was home to at least one protective Lares figure, along with images of the household's penates, genius, and any other favored gods. During family meals and banquets, the statues occupied their own place at the table, and the Lares acted as divine witnesses at important family occasions, such as marriages, births, and adoptions. Individuals who failed to meet the needs of their household gods expected neither reward nor good fortune for themselves or their families. The paterfamilias maintained proper household behavior and piety. However, the paterfamilias often delegated the tending of the lararium and household spiritual needs to other family members and servants. Offerings to the household gods included spelt wheat and grain-garlands, honey cakes and honeycombs, grapes and first fruits, wine, or incense.

For Romans descended from conquered populations, these "household deities" were so nebulously defined that Celts and Gauls retained some aspect of worshipping their own gods within their homes. This helped many conquered peoples more fully assimilate into the Roman Empire.

Religious Colleges

In Rome, any organization that claimed at least three individuals and obtained the legal approval of the city could become a college. Colleges served any number of purposes in Rome, as social clubs, legal entities, guilds, or secret societies. These groups sprang up around any cause, as long as they met the legal definition of college. However, after that point, the government took a more direct hand in guiding such groups.

Despite this loose definition of colleges, and the relative ease in creating them, Roman law was stricter regarding religious colleges. As the state tied worship to the success of Rome, these great colleges had stringent requirements for joining, in addition to well-defined roles and responsibilities within the city. Each of the great colleges served their purpose, ensuring that Rome always received the favor of its gods.

The four great religious colleges, in order of descending importance, were the Pontifices, Augeres, Quindecimviri, and Epulones. The *Pontifices*, also known as the College of Pontiffs, were the highest-ranking members of the state religion, who led the other orders and defined much of public and private religious life. The *Augeres* interpreted the demands and desires of the

Gods, passing these messages to other orders as appropriate. The *Quindecimviri* had fifteen members, all who guarding and interpreting the Sibylline books and managing the worship of foreign gods. Finally, the *Epulones* managed the feasts held at public ceremonies and games, and maintained the religious relics and tools used for these feasts.

Each of these groups relied on the others to maintain the religious order of Rome. While some enjoyed responsibilities with more power, such as the College of Pontifices controlling and directing the other groups, all were necessary so that the gods always provided for Rome.

Pontifices

Description: The College of Pontifices, a group of state priests at the highest level, wielded authority over all other religious colleges. Led by the *Pontifex Maximus*, the highest religious authority in the Empire, their numbers included several other important religious orders, such as the *Rex Sacrorum*, the fifteen *Flamines*, and the *Vestal Virgins*.

The word *Pontifex* came from the Latin words *pons* (bridge) and *facere* (to do or make), meaning that the orders belonging to the Pontifices built connections between Rome's people and the gods. They built metaphorical bridges — such as methods of worship, religious tools, laws, and festivals — closing the divide between the divine world of the gods and the mundane world of mortals.

Rome held the Pontifices in the highest esteem, so membership in any of their orders was usually limited to those from powerful families. Except for the *Vestal Virgins*, who occupied their roles for 30 years, all other appointments were for life — or until the Senate voted otherwise.

Authority: When the Pontifices first formed, their responsibilities only included oversight of the public and private ceremonies honoring the gods. However, as these priests became close to rulers and

politicians, and acted as advisors and confidantes, the priesthood's power grew. While different groups within the Pontifices each had varying responsibilities, almost all of them included advising the people of Rome on issues pertaining to the gods and how to appease them.

As part of their oversight of festivals and ceremonies, the *Lex Acilia* bestowed the ability to manage Rome's calendar upon the Pontifices. The Pontifices arranged festivals, offered advice on how best to appease the gods if something went awry, and made changes as necessary in order to ensure divine favor. They determined when sacrifices were made, elections were held, and when celebrations occurred. In addition, when prodigies — strange phenomena or portents such as meteor showers or natural disasters — occurred, the Pontifices reported to the Senate regarding the nature of these events, and what divine messages these strange occurrences meant.

Their most important responsibility, however, was the keeping and interpretation of the *libri pontificales* (pontifical books). These books recorded much of the history of Roman religion, including records of all rituals performed, records of marriages and deaths, the *indigitamenta* (a list of rituals, invocations, and names for deities), and *annals* (the yearly records of magistrates and other important events). If a service, person, or event was tied to religion, the Pontifices recorded it in the books. Only the Pontifices possessed these records, and only they could consult them.

Augures

Description: While the College of Augures was a Roman creation, the practice of Augury predated even the grandest empire. People had long looked to those who could interpret signs from the natural world, to help them put a firmer hand on fate or what the gods had in store for them. For Rome, this role fell to the Augures. While interpreting the nature of strange events and their meaning was for the

Pontifices, Augeres watched the natural world for signs of the gods' desires for Rome. Along with this, they determined which signs took precedence over others, such as if a portent from an eagle was more important than that of a sparrow.

Authority: Augeres interpreted signs and portents on an official level, and reported these to the people of Rome. They offered these services to anyone, but the powerful elite more often supported the college. This gave the Augeres some measure of power, and while they did not wield the absolute control of the Pontifices, they persuaded others to take a preferred action through the judicious interpretation of a portent.

However, when the Soothsayers wrested the future of Rome from the hands of the smaller colleges, they wiped out the College of Augeres. As the Augeres were a threat to the Soothsayers' potential power base, the Soothsayers slaughtered them with little hesitation. The Soothsayers could not kill all of the Augeres during that coup. Some who were away on business, or read the signs just so, escaped and went underground in order to avoid the wrath of this new faction. This event forced these Augeres into back alleys and in secret places, hiding their voices among the mad or the forgotten, and passing along the rebellious message that the Soothsayers didn't know all of the future.

The Quindecimviri

Description: The Quindecimviri was a group of fifteen priests, one of the few which notably includes both Plebeians and Patricians, as required by law.

Authority: The Quindecimviri were the second group wiped out when the Soothsayers took over. Since their responsibilities included interpreting the Sibylline Books and speaking with the Roman elite about the prophecies contained within, this put them in control of a powerful resource, which the Soothsayers wanted. Furthermore, this order took responsibility for how new and foreign gods

integrated into current Roman worship, giving them the ability to control conquered peoples and their beliefs. Like the Augeres, some of them escaped the murderous Soothsayers. The survivors banded together with the Augeres, using their knowledge of the books to find a new path forward for Rome — one not controlled by the Soothsayers.

Epulones

Description: As Rome grew, so did the intricacy of its festivals and ceremonies. Each new leader brought with them traditions from their youth, and every conquered nation contributed their own traditions to incorporate into Roman religion. These festivities grew into elaborate, ritualistic affairs that required management from experienced priests. Thus, the Epulones formed. Like the Quindecimviri, this group accepted both Plebian and Patrician priests, all familiar with the etiquette and rules of the celebrations of Roman religion.

Authority: The Epulones prepared the city for feasts and festivals. Well-versed in both the political and religious nature of these events, the Epulones ensured everything ran smoothly and pleased the gods. They also maintained the religious relics required for these parties, such as the *patera* — a bowl used to provide libations for the sacred fire — which was their emblem.

Prominent Orders

Within the religious colleges, a number of smaller orders existed to support the larger priesthoods. In some cases, Rome maintained these orders as to claim their actions were correct because they had divine approval, while other groups answered to the needs of the city in a way that pleased the ruling elite as well as the gods.

Fetiales

Description: As an order of priests dedicated to Jupiter in his aspect of good faith, the *Fetiales* formed in times of war. Rome needed its interactions with other territories mediated by a divine agent, and negotiations and declarations empowered with

the will of the Jupiter. The Fetiales studied to become experts in divine laws (including all of their myriad technicalities), diplomacy, and rituals surrounding international relations and war.

Authority: The Fetiales had many functions surrounding war, reparations, and treaties. They invoked Jupiter during these tasks, as they did not have goals in alignment with Mars' aspect of conquest, but rather in finding lawful resolutions (which could include war). Like many things in Rome, their invocation of Jupiter empowered their actions, providing a divine guidance that could not be questioned.

The leading official, known as the *pater patratus*, almost always conducted these negotiations. They were the primary actor in the ritual to demand reparations. First, they declared Rome's demands at edge of the enemy's frontier, then in sequence: at their borders, to the first man they met, at the enemy's gate, and then finally before those in power. The *pater patratus* then waited 33 days for the enemy to meet these demands. If the enemy refused, the *pater* invoked Jupiter, and reported the results back to the Roman Senate. There, the Senate determined if a formal declaration of war was necessary. If Rome decided to go to war, the ritual concluded with the *pater* throwing a blood-tipped javelin into enemy territory.

The other major function of the Fetiales was negotiating and sanctifying treaties. This duty included a formal ritual in order to obtain Jupiter's blessing for agreements made between Rome and leaders of other nations. As part of this ritual, the *pater patratus* asked for witnesses to the treaty, including the gods themselves, and swore that Rome be struck down should she not abide by her word. During these oaths, both sides stroked a flintstone as an invocation of the god Jupiter, asking him to seal their promises.

The Flamines

Description: Older than even the Republic, the *Flamines* were a group of fifteen priests dedicated to the cults of Rome. As a part of the College of Pontifices, they wielded absolute control over their areas of expertise, and their decisions on the behalf of their patron god formed the basis of what Rome required in worship and tribute to the divine powers.

The Flamines divided into two groups: three *flamines maiores* and twelve *flamines minores*. Law required the three flamines maiores to be Patricians, with one serving each of the major gods of Rome: Jupiter (*Flamen Dialis*, who was barred from political and martial pursuits), Mars (*Flamen Martialis*), and Quirinus (*Flamen Quirinalis*). Caesar added a fourth flamines maiores, dedicated to his worship, and set a precedent that those leaders who followed him could also be deified and have an assigned flamen (as long as they received approval of the Senate).

The Flamens' spouses also had a role in the ceremonies. Titled the *Flamenica Dialis*, these women had their own set of sacrifices, rituals, and dress society expected them to perform. Furthermore, their faith subjected them to many of the restrictions of their spouses' positions. For all intents and purposes, they were an order of priestesses dedicated to the worship of the same gods their husbands served.

Of the twelve remaining flamens, only ten were well known. Historians suspected the other two were old agricultural gods who fell out of favor as the young Empire developed a more metropolitan culture. The flamines minores served: Carmentis (*Flamen Carmentalis*), Ceres (*Flamen Cerialis*), Falacer (*Flamen Falacer*), Flora (*Flamen Floralis*), Furinna (*Flamen Furrinalis*), Palatua (*Flamen Palatualis*), Pomona (*Flamen Pomonalis*), Portuna (*Flamen Portunalis*), Vulcan (*Flamen Volcanalis*), and Voltunus (*Flamen Volturnalis*).

Their vestments included an *apex*, a leather skull-cap held in place by a strap. At the top of the apex was a spindle with wool gathered at the bottom of it. The Flamens also wore a thick, woolen cloak with a fringed edge known as a *laena* over their toga.

Authority: The Flamines oversaw the rituals and festivals dedicated to their patron god. They sanctified and led the rites performed, making decisions regarding what was appropriate in terms of behavior and sacrifices. They also acted as the final authority regarding the god they served. Those in power consulted them whenever they wished to obtain the favor of the gods, believing the Flamines were the most direct conduit to finding out what pleased a deity. As a result, Flamines, even the minor ones, exerted a great deal of power. Few dared to cross their will when it came to what the gods wanted.

Fratres Arvales

Description: Also known as Arval Brethren, the *Fratres Arvales* originated before the Empire, with Romulus taking the first leadership position among the order of priests. Legend states he took the place of a nurse's son, forming the priesthood with her remaining children. They used the symbol of white band with the chaplet of sheaves of grain.

Twelve priests formed the Arval Brethren, all appointed for life. While other priesthoods might claim similar appointments, political machinations often led to situations when the state replaced priests or priestesses. However, the Arval Brethren kept their positions even in exile. As a result, Rome selected those for the Brethren particular care, and with a great deal of foresight into how such choices affected the political landscape of the Empire.

Authority: The Fratres Arvales served two related purposes: keeping both the Lares and the gods and goddesses of harvest pleased with the city of Rome. For the Lares, the brotherhood dictated the rituals

necessary to appease the spirits, as well as advising how to provide reparation to angry spirits.

More was known about their work as devotees of the harvest deities. The magister of the brotherhood chose three days in May when the priests began to secretly recite prayers and make offerings. The priests started this ritual within a temple in Rome, continued it on the second day in a sacred grove outside the city walls, then returned to the city on the third day.

They also prepared rituals and sacrifices made to honor Ceres at the end of May. One of the sacrifices required walking their sacrifice, usually a sow, around the field to be blessed, then the farmers offered her milk, honey, and iron. During these rituals, the Arval Brotherhood could not use iron, but instead made use of a jar of unbaked earth (an *olla terrea*) and a silver sacrificial burner made in the image of Dea Dia, decorated with grassy clods.

Rex Sacrorum

Description: Of even greater prestige than the Flamines Maiores, and from cultures older than the Empire itself, the *Rex Sacrorum* was a solely Patrician priesthood. These priests were born only from the most sacred of couplings, and chosen by the Pontifex Maximus. Their appointment was thus supported by the highest religious figure in all of Rome, and it was a great honor to be chosen for the role. However, as the priest could not hold a political or martial role, many refused the mantle, as it made them little more than a figurehead.

Marriage was an important basis for this appointment. In order for a Rex Sacrorum to be eligible, the state required their parents married through the traditional Patrician marriage of confarreation. Rome also required the same type of marriage from the priest. His wife was known as the *Regina Sacrorum*, and had her own religious responsibilities dependent upon her husband's position. Marriage was so important to the

responsibilities of the Rex Sacrorum that should the Regina die, or should the couple divorce, and the Rex not re-enter a confarreation with a new spouse, the priest was forced to abdicate.

The appropriate dress for the Rex Sacrorum was a toga, unadorned shoes, and a ceremonial axe. The priest also wore a head covering when performing their official responsibilities. The Regina Sacrorum wore an *arculum*, a garland of pomegranate branches tied with white thread.

Authority: For the most part, the Rex Sacrorum was a priesthood of figureheads. The position had little political power, but did take on sacred responsibilities assigned to kings prior to the Roman Empire, such as hosting monthly sacrifices and announcing holidays and festivals for the following month.

In reality, the Regina Sacrorum had a more publicly powerful role. Not only was her husband's position dependent upon the Regina, but she held a publicly acknowledged role as high priestess. On the first day of each month, she sacrificed a sow to honor Juno, in front of the people of Rome. Considered a sacred queen, she often interacted with others and advised on how best to appease the goddesses within her sphere of expertise.

Vestal Virgins

Description: Of all the religious orders of Rome, historians knew the most about the Vestal Virgins. This group of women served the goddess of the hearth, Vesta by keeping the sacred flame that Romans considered the heart and home of the city continuously burning. Few orders enjoyed the prestige or respect afforded the Vestals, and the Empire revered and loved them.

The state initially chose Vestal Virgins from Patrician families in high standing, but as more of these families balked at the requirements of service, any girl-child of free parents became eligible. Every year,

the Pontifex Maximus chose from girls between the ages of two to six years, free of mental or physical defects, and with two living parents. If chosen, he took them away in a ceremony known as the *captio* — the capture. The only time this initiation did not occur was if a Vestal Virgin died while in service. The lead Vestal chose her successor from the purest candidates of a similar age as the deceased. This was the only time a Vestal Virgin did not have to be a virgin — even the widowed or divorced were considered, despite the belief that they bring bad luck.

Once the chosen Vestal Virgin entered the atrium of the Temple of Vesta, they were both under Rome's protection and sisters to the entire city. Their sexual purity was also thought to directly influence Rome's fortunes, and they took a vow of chastity as any sexual relationship with another Roman was thought incestuous. While the state outlawed directly killing a Vestal, even for those who might punish, they bricked up Vestals who purposefully broke their vow of chastity beneath the temple with enough food and water to put their fate in the hands of the gods.

Vestals served for a period of thirty years. They dedicated their first decade of service to studying under the older priestesses, learning the intricacies of how to serve Vesta and Rome. After this period, the Vestal spent ten years in service to Rome, carrying out her public responsibilities. After this, she taught the students within the Temple of Vesta for a decade. Once she completed her term of service, the Vestal Virgin retired and a new Vestal took her place. She received a pension, and the Pontifex Maximus, acting as the father of the bride, usually arranged a marriage with a high-ranking noble. Marriage to a retired Vestal Virgin was thought lucky, especially when taking her pension into account.

Not only did their new husbands find them lucky, but the entire Empire of Rome believed in the good fortune the Vestals brought to the city. They gained Caesar a pardon when they intervened on his behalf.

Even lesser criminals were pardoned of their crimes if touched by a Vestal Virgin, and those destined for execution avoided death if they saw a Vestal Virgin on their way to die. Many believed the Vestals had magical powers, and the desecration of their temple by a Christian woman was later believed to have caused the fall of Rome.

Vestal Virgins dressed in a manner which represented their multiple roles to the city — as sisters, mothers, and symbols of Rome's purity. They wore both the stola and the vittae, the former a symbol of a bride and the latter of a matron, as well as arranging their gowns in fashions that resembled both a woman first going to her husband and an experienced mother. Regardless of this contradiction in fashion, their wardrobe was white to represent the purity of their souls.

Authority: Keeping the flame at the center of the Temple of Vesta burning was one of the most important responsibilities of the Vestal Virgins. This flame was the hearth of Rome, and just like in the home, the Vestals protected it at all costs. The Vestal Virgins and their responsibility were such an intrinsic part of Roman life that they were one of the few groups to live in a building away from others, in close proximity to their temple. Letting the flame go out was the worst abandonment of responsibility, and subjected to intense physical punishment. The *Vestaliu Maximum* was the most important Roman high priestess, and unlike other orders which had female counterparts, such as the Rex Sacrorum, she held her office independently of any male influence. She held the chief festival of the Vestals, the *Vestalia*, celebrated in June. The Vestals opened their private sanctuary to the mothers of families, who brought food. In return, the Vestals gathered grain to make the *mola salsa* — the grains offered in tribute before every public sacrifice and salt cakes.

The Vestals had any number of smaller responsibilities, both official and unofficial. They kept the legal wills in Rome. Other priests invited them to

every festival and ceremony, considering it extremely good fortune to have a Vestal present. They also tended to the sick, visited the elite to offer advice regarding Ceres, and attended other events. For Rome, the Vestals were a religious symbol and the city's heart, belonging to the people as much as to themselves.

Religious Festivals

Rome appointed priests and created religious orders for almost every event, putting men and women in positions of power and expertise, so they might gain divine favor.

Players in Mystical Rome can take on the role of these priests and priestesses. While they hold the most sway in issues involving the festivals of the deity they were dedicated to, those who gave themselves over to the gods were always afforded some measure of respect.

Some examples of priests dedicated to specific events were the Luperci, the brotherhood dedicated to the God Lupercus and his festival of Lupercalia; the Salii, the leaping priests of Mars who performed various rituals in the month of March to honor their god; and the Antoni, priests dedicated to Antony and the Festival of Antony, created to honor the memory of the man who sacrificed his life for Caesar.

Specialized Orders

Haruspices

Description: Adapted from the Etruscans, *Haruspices* practiced the art of *haruspicy*, the reading of entrails from sacrificed animals. Romans dedicated sacrificed animals to the gods, therefore reading their remains provided omens, signs, and information on future events.

While there was no specific order of priests dedicated to this task, several colleges taught this art, and Romans kept books outlining how to perform the task to ensure they were not lost. The most comprehensive of these books, the *Libri Tagetici*, was Etruscan in origin, and the basis for much Roman understanding of the art. The Soothsayer Academy trained their students to scoff at this backwards way of understanding the future.

The Libitinarii

Description: All events in Rome occurred under the watchful eyes of the gods, even death. The *Libitinarii* were the priests and priestesses of the goddess Libitina, who oversaw funerals and burials. The

members of this order acted as undertakers, with their temple used to perform funeral rites and preparation for burial. Since laws forbade the burying of bodies within the city, these preparations often were complex, as they not only included planning the funeral procession, but ensuring the body could withstand transport to one of the appropriate burial sites. Some looked down on this group, considering them unclean as they handled the flesh of the dead, but their tasks were a necessary part of life in Rome.

Philosophy

The Hellenistic period heavily influenced the philosophy of Ancient Rome. Interest in the topic was uncommon until after the conquest of Greece, when an influx of Greek citizens raised awareness among the general population. Although elite Roman students long studied philosophical writings, lower-class citizens did not well know the topic.

Typically, the young elite Romans who spread philosophy had both the wealth and ability to travel and study in Greece. As with so many things in Rome, only the wealthy studied philosophy. Two major schools of thought influenced Roman philosophical views: Stoicism and Epicureanism. Though teachings from other schools appeared in Roman history, the majority of citizens focused on these traditions. Often, Roman citizens found philosophical debate too Greek for their tastes, preferring instead to focus on law and rhetoric.

The first, and most popular, school of philosophical thought was Stoicism. Founded by Zeno of Citium in the 3rd century BCE, and heavily influenced by the teachings of Socrates and Heraclitus, Stoicism was a philosophy of personal ethics which focused heavily on logic and accepting the natural order of the world. This acceptance of all situations, even adverse ones, nicely complemented many of the Roman virtues, particularly *virtus*. Unlike other schools of philosophical thought, who kept their ideas semi-secret, Zeno and his disciples chose to publicly discuss the tenets of Stoicism with anyone willing to listen.

As Stoicism gained popularity in Greece, the beliefs eventually migrated to Rome, carried largely by Diogenes of Babylon and Panaetius of Rhodes in 155 BCE. After meeting Scipio Aemilianus and gaining his friendship, Panaetius and Diogenes traveled to Rome with the intent of sharing Stoic ideals with the Roman elite. Here, they grew close to Scipio, and Panaetius became a member of the Scipionic Circle — a group of poets, philosophers,

writers, and artists who enjoyed Scipio's patronage. During this time, many distinguished Romans flocked to learn from the famed philosophers. Many Romans adopted Stoicism with ease, and it quickly became popular among the elite to discuss theories put forth by Diogenes and Panaetius.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was another famous Stoic. A talented statesman, orator, lawyer, and philosopher, Cicero was one of the highly educated elite. He greatly influenced not only the development of Stoic beliefs in Rome, but his translations into Latin became widely known. This included creating a Latin philosophical vocabulary and comprehensive accounts of Greek philosophy, which helped make the school of thought more accessible to a wider range of Roman citizens. Despite his political downfall due to his differences with Caesar, his work in Stoicism remained influential on Roman life.

Ethics, physics, and logic comprised the three main areas of study. Physics, also known as natural philosophy, encompassed natural science and metaphysics of the time. For example, Stoics once believed the universe was birthed by a cosmic fire, which would eventually consume everything and start the cycle over. The physics of Stoicism also contributed to the belief that everything had a cause and a purpose in the grander scheme of Nature and the Universe. Some interpreted this to mean God, but many referred to the Universe and its rational principles as *Logos*. Stoic logic involved rhetoric, epistemology, psychology, and various social sciences.

One of the crucial points of Stoicism was the belief that life must be lived according to Nature, reason, and the Universe. Everything was subject to these laws of fate, and every human possesses the same spark of the divine *Logos*. Stoics believed that all people were equal and should be treated as such. Stoic thought required acceptance of events as a direct path to happiness, no matter the personal suffering such events caused. Stoics believed a virtuous life was the only good choice for humans, and living according to established virtues was far preferable than living to acquire material goods, wealth, or any other external validation. Freedom from passion was one of the ultimate achievements, and could only be found by following reason rather than emotions. Stoics who achieved moral or intellectual perfection were called Sages, and many believed them immune to misfortune.

Although reason and logic were founding principles of Stoicism, followers of this school of thought did not suppress their emotions. Rather, Stoics strived to transform their emotions in search of inner calm. Emotions couldn't be avoided, but Stoics judged in a rational and reasonable manner. Through a balance of reason and dedication to the cardinal virtues — wisdom, courage,

justice, and temperance — one found *eudaimonia*, flourishing through living an ethical life.

Epicureanism was the second popular school of philosophical thought. Based on the teachings of Epicurus, he founded this classically hedonistic school in roughly 307 BCE. Influenced by the teachings of Democritus and Aristippus, Epicurus taught that pleasure was the greatest good of life. Although this school was technically hedonistic, due to its focus on the pursuit of pleasure, the adherence to a simple life and the Epicurean definition of “pleasure” made it quite different than our modern interpretation of hedonism.

Epicureanism rose to popularity after Epicurus purchased the property for his school, aptly named the Garden. Here, Epicurus taught his students to enjoy a simple life. Friendship was emphasized as a vital aspect of happiness. This moderately ascetic community in Athens rejected politics, on the grounds that the political lifestyle had too much potential to corrupt virtue and disturb peace of mind. Although not strictly forbidden, the philosophy heavily discouraged political endeavors. In hyper-political Athens, this stance cast Epicurus and his followers in a poor light, as they were often seen to be shirking their civic duties. Other philosophers of the time denounced those Epicureans who withdrew from public life as unbridled hedonists lacking in virtue and duty.

In the early 1st century BCE, Gaius Amafinius and Rabirius brought Epicureanism to the Roman public through their writings. They translated Epicurean teachings in order to make the work more accessible to Romans. Though their peers disparaged them for their efforts, they continued to teach and spread Epicurus’ words. The school of thought swiftly gained popularity among the Roman populace; however, opponents criticized the belief system as little more than an excuse to delve into unbridled hedonism. Cicero, in particular, greatly disdained Epicureanism, and derided the beliefs at every turn.

In truth, Epicureanism was hedonistic only in name. Although Epicurus claimed that pleasure was the chief good in life, he advocated finding this pleasure by living a life of moderation, in hopes of avoiding the suffering incurred by overindulgence. In addition, physical pleasures were to be minimized. For example, although recreational sex was a natural desire, it was not necessary for survival and thus inconsequential to lasting pleasure. Humans found true pleasure through minimizing pain, anxiety, and suffering.

Epicureans believed that Nature commanded us to avoid pain. This school of thought divided pleasure into two broad categories: pleasures of the body

and pleasures of the mind. Pleasures of the body involved sensations such as eating delicious food or being pain free, and only existed in the moment. On the other hand, pleasures of the mind involved mental processes, such as feelings of joy and pleasant memories. While pleasures of the body were fleeting, pleasures of the mind existed in the past, present, and future, making them far superior in the eyes of Epicureans.

Epicureans divided these pleasures into *kinetic pleasure* and *katastematic pleasure*. Kinetic pleasure was pleasure involving action or change, while katastematic pleasure was a pain-free state. Thus, Epicureans believed the greatest pleasure was the removal of all pain, physical and mental. Epicurus further described three different kinds of desires: the natural and necessary, the natural but not necessary, and those that were neither natural nor necessary.

Despite the ultimate goal of pleasure through simplicity, Epicurus taught that pain and suffering should be endured if peace was obtained through it. Even death was not feared, as it simply was another state of being. Unlike many other schools of thought of the time, Epicureanism taught that the gods did not intervene in the everyday workings of the world. Many Romans believed the gods existed; however, they resided somewhere outside of reality. In counterpoint, Epicurus posited that relying on the gods only brought further suffering. For the Romans, who venerated their deities, this was a difficult point to accept.

Thanks to the work of Cicero, Amfinius, and Rabirius, philosophy became accessible to Romans from all social classes. Affluent households worked to ensure even their slaves were well-educated, with at least a working knowledge of the paterfamilias' favorite school of thought. Though both of the prevalent schools of thought shared some similarities, their differences created deep schisms within society. Following the failed attempt on Caesar's life, the popularity of mysticism rose sharply, casting some doubt on the validity of philosophy's teachings.

Reference Material: The Body Politic – The Government of Rome

"If you must break the law, do it to seize power; in all other cases observe it."

— Gaius Julius Caesar

As a culture and a democratic republic, Ancient Rome was a civilization the United States still holds in high regard. Art, philosophy, and literature from

the era persist, as have some of the traditions and ideas surrounding democracy and government. Although Roman politicking looks quite different than modern governments, many of our current beliefs and systems stem from policies developed during the height of Roman power. In this section, we provide historical details, mild speculation, and relevant plot points intended to bring the *Mystical Rome* experience to life. In the world of *Mystical Rome*, money and favors are used to circumvent the law, widening class divides. Within this section, you will also find historically accurate information, combined with the slightly altered history of *Mystical Rome*. We offer just enough information to be dangerous and tell excellent stories, without overwhelming players with the minutiae of daily Roman politics.

If your game looks to be heavily influenced by government and politics, more information can be found in some of the histories mentioned in the Genre: Inspiration section (page xx). As always, Directors can change or alter historical facts and details if doing so makes for a better story.

Cursus Honorum – The Course of Offices

In Rome, tradition and ritual ruled supreme. Laws skewed to the benefit of the wealthy, and those in power often bypassed multiple rules, thanks to their wealth and social prestige. Those with power flagrantly ignored the law, while those with less influence waded through bureaucracy to achieve their goals.

In theory, the *Cursus Honorum*, or Course of Offices, was a sequential order of public offices for those of Patrician or equestrian rank. Each office had a minimum age for election and a set term limit, along with minimum intervals between certain ranks and laws that forbade repeating one of the steps. While the state used this method so as many citizens as possible had the opportunity for public service, corruption and self-aggrandizement meant many sold and traded these important political positions.

The first step in the *Cursus Honorum* was serving in the military for 10 years, starting at the age of fifteen. Although this step was mandatory for all male Roman citizens, this requirement often got pushed to the side. Alternately, rather than serve active duty, young Patricians often became a military tribune. Many coveted this position, as it carried a great deal of prestige and power.

Once a citizen completed their time within the military, they began climbing the Cursus Honorum, with all subsequent positions awarded via direct appointment or election. Those who achieved each new office at the youngest possible age — also known as *suo anno*, or “in his own year” — achieved great political success. Often, missing a single step in the Cursus Honorum spelled the end of a political career. For more information on the offices in this track, see **Magistrates Lesser Offices**, page xx

Although this list is not exhaustive, the most prominent and powerful positions within government are described below.

The Emperor

Gaius Julius Caesar stood at the head of the Roman Empire as it spanned the world. His mere words were de facto law in the Pax Romana, even if Caesar insisted upon the accepted fiction that he was merely an elected Consul of Rome. With a private army in the form of the Praetorian Guard, and the support of the Soothsayers, none dared risk the Emperor’s wrath.

Caesar first accepted the title of Dictator in 49 BCE, which he relinquished after his election to Consul. In 48 BCE, Rome named him Dictator once again, and his one-year term was extended into a ten-year one due to his impeachment of those who opposed him, and his work to swell the Senate with loyal supporters. Shortly before the failed attempt on Caesar’s life, he accepted the titles of Consul and Dictator for life, a political gambit that influenced the events of the Ides of March. Although a series of legal checks and balances previously existed to prevent such absolute power, the Senate gave Caesar complete control of the Empire and immunity to censure. Some detractors said his uncle Gaius Marius influenced Caesar’s drive for power with his unprecedented seven terms as Consul.

On the Ides of March, Anthony offered Caesar a crown three times, and three times he refused. Anthony believed a war with the Parthians was necessary, even though the Sibylline Books held in

the Senate clearly stated only a Rome united by a king could win against their enemies. Though Caesar survived the attempt on his life, he continued to refuse the crown, maintaining the charade he was nothing more than an elected ruler.

Caesar made it clear to his constituents that he was to be known as and referred to by one of two titles. His preferred title was Imperator, the title of a victorious general bestowed upon him after his Triumph in Gaul. The other title was kingly, yet still favored among some of his most ardent supporters: *Pater Patriae*, or "father of fathers." Paterfamilias all over Rome used this title to refer to Caesar. For more information, see Reference Material: A Primer on the Culture and Traditions of Rome: Paterfamilias, page xx.

Consuls of Rome

Consuls of Rome wielded vast executive and judicial power. Every year, voting citizens elected two new Consuls to serve a one-year term. During that time, the Consuls alternated who wielded power every month, taking turns serving as chair of the Senate. As long as the Consul remained in the city of Rome, they were the head of government. Every public appearance included the appearance of twelve Lictors, each armed with fasces, and dedicated to protecting the Consuls. Although leadership alternated, each Consul had veto power over the other, though they rarely used this power.

A noted exception existed when the Senate voted to award one of the Consuls the title of Dictator perpetuo ("dictator in perpetuity"), and then their term lasted until retirement. The Juli held these august titles for nearly twenty years. Many expected the Emperor's retirement, but his health was surprisingly flush with youth for a man of his years. Some whispered that the Soothsayers extended his life through unnatural means.

During times of emergency or war, Consuls possessed sweeping powers to raise and command

armies. Even during peace, they were the supreme commanders of the army. In peacetime, the Consuls acted as chief diplomats of the Roman state and maintained peace between outlying provinces. Upon the completing their term, the state appointed each Consul Governor of an important province, where he enjoyed high-autocratic authority within their region.

In the *Mystical Rome* Genre, Gaius Julius Caesar remained Consul after his lifetime Senate appointment. The second Consul, Caesar's adopted son Gaius Julius Octavius Ptolemy, served as Governor of Egypt. Although Octavius theoretically possessed the same legal powers and authorities as his co-Consul, he was subordinate to Caesar and his term expired if not reelected. The position of Consul, while still holding a great deal of power over the Senate, became an appointed position rather than an elected one, and clearly one gained through nepotism. The absolute power Caesar held left many Senators uneasy and concerned with the political future of Rome.

Lictor

Elected officials of Rome enjoyed the protection of Lictors, bodyguards who served those holding imperial power. Leaders chose these strong, able-bodied men from among the Plebeians and freedmen, and tasked them with protecting the Consuls and other Roman magistrates. In exchange, Lictors earned a steady salary, and avoided military service. Typically, each magistrate chose their own Lictors. Each Lictor carried a fasces, a bundle of rods containing an axe, which represented the power of Rome. Within city limits, they removed the axe to symbolize that no citizen was executed without a trial.

Although Lictors typically only served magistrates, they attended Vestal Virgins as they performed public ceremonies, or other private citizens who warranted such protection. In addition to protecting their assigned charge, Lictors served at their

master's command, and they had the power to arrest or punish as directed.

Caesar's power extended to the far reaches of the Empire, and the position of Lictor was no exception. Although each Lictor was loyal to their magister, the Emperor controlled and commanded the Lictors, and through them, the Praetorian Guard. Rumors in the Senate state Lictors loyal to Caesar neglected their other duties in a bid to injure or destroy their enemies.

Praetorian Guard

The tradition of the Praetorian Guard first came to prominence during the rise of the Scipio family, to protect military officers during extended campaigns. Praetorians enjoyed greater pay, prestige, freedom, and power, and they could carry a weapon within the Pomerium — the sacred center of Rome. The Consul or a commanding military officer hand-picked this trusted group of guards. As civil war and political chaos became more prevalent, the Praetorian Guard shifted from a small group of bodyguards to a vast personal army.

The Praetorian Guard served to keep veterans employed and loyal to the state, with the added benefit of granting the Emperor control of the only military force within the city. People rarely opposed the Pater Patriae, for fear of finding an attachment of Praetorians at the foot of their bed. While members of the Praetorian Guard remained loyal to and protected Caesar at all times, this was only one of their duties. They also worked as emergency firefighters or city guards, fought in the arena at the pleasure of the Emperor, and carried out any number of nefarious deeds for Caesar and his sycophants.

In the *Mystical Rome* Genre, the Praetorian Guard is a superior legion comprised largely of veterans and loyal citizens. The Lictors command them, and each guard is loyal only to the Emperor Caesar. With nine cohorts of 500 men each, many of them in

Rome at the command of Caesar, the Praetorian Guard is a brutal force to be reckoned with.

The Senate of Rome

At its inception, the Senate of the Republic acted as an advisory board to the king. Their duties expanded as quickly as the Empire, and in time, the Senate became responsible for the election of each new king. This involved both nomination and confirmation of candidates for monarch. While the king was theoretically elected by the citizens of Rome, the Senate had the ability to empower a candidate, regardless of the popular vote. As the Empire evolved, so too did the responsibilities and power of the Senate.

Citizens did not elect members of the Senate. They were instead a collection of venerated and wealthy Patricians and Plebeians who proved their worth to Rome. In addition to staunch requirements regarding wealth and prestige, each Senator swore to a set of ethical guidelines. Senators could not participate in public banking, hold public contracts, own a ship capable of commerce, or leave Italy without permission. Consuls or their Censors, acting as representatives of the Imperator, made appointments to the Senate directly. However, Caesar retained power in appointing and removing Senators as certain protocols and traditions were still observed.

Though many traditionalists feared the Imperator undermined the power of the Senate, the ruling body still retained control over many aspects of government. The Imperators left the treasury, administration of public lands, and issues of foreign policy in the hands of the Senate. They retained the power to authorize the appointment of a Dictator, a power last utilized shortly before the attempt on Caesar's life. Furthermore, while the Imperator finalized any legal decrees, the Senate still held the power of *senatus consultum*—and official notice from Senate to a magistrate that became defacto law. Any magistrante who failed to uphold these decrees found legal trouble. This division of power gave birth

to a tenuous truce between Caesar and his Senate detractors. Neither had the power to decimate the other, at least not at the time, but tensions mounted nonetheless.

Roman Assemblies

The three Roman Assemblies were representative democratic political institutions with the power to elect magistrates, enact laws, dispense capital punishment, declare war and peace, and create or dissolve foreign alliances. Under the constitution, these assemblies — and the citizens they represented — functioned as the ultimate source of sovereignty. Citizens elected members to the Assemblies through open ballot. Although this empowered the people with a direct vote, a single magistrate oversaw each assembly, and made the final decisions on matters of procedure and legality. Only vetoes from other magistrates overturned such decisions.

Assemblies were either a committee of all citizens assembling for an official purpose, such as enactment of laws, or a council, a forum where groups gathered for official purposes. Before any vote was taken, participants organized into conventions, a forum for discussion, debate, socializing, and delivering speeches.

Each assembly represented a different faction of Roman society, and each controlled certain aspects of Roman life:

- **Comitia Centuria:** In this assembly, all citizens voted with their cultural tribe, as defined by Rome, known as a *century*. While all votes within a century were equal, not all centuries were equal. Some centuries with more established tribes had more power, even if it was not official. One such group was Comitia Centuria, a tribe that elected Consuls, Praetors, and Censors; declared war; ratified census results; and served as the highest court of appeal for certain cases.

- Comitia Tributa: Originally, this assembly divided citizens into the fourteen regions of Rome. As with the Comitia Centuria, once they reached a majority within each tributa, they casted a vote on the matter. The Comitia Tributa reselected Quaestors and the Curule Aediles and also conducted certain trials.
- Concilium Plebis: The Plebian council, made up of only Plebians, passed laws, elected magistrates, and tried judicial cases. This assembly represented the Plebeians, and they elected the Plebeian Aediles and the Tribunes of the Plebs.

Since Caesar's ascent, the assemblies had their power stripped, little by little. Though he still adhered to the results of assemblies, the Imperator undermined the power of the people by disbanding some of the assemblies. Further, evidence suggested the outcome of the assemblies was dependent upon Caesar's wishes.

Magistrates' Offices

Collectively, every elected official in the Roman Republic was called a magistrate, and each separate position carried varying degrees of power, prestige, and responsibility. Any magistrate had the power to veto an action taken by a lower ranking magistrate; however, only an extraordinary magistrate — one declared Dictator in a time of emergency — had the power to veto the actions of the Plebeian Tribunes and plebian Aediles. The ranking of the magistrate offices, in descending order of importance and power, were:

- Consul
- Praetor
- Censor
- Curule Aedile
- Quaestor

Every magistrate had a level of power and command, called their major powers, or *major potestas*. The most significant constitutional power granted to any magistrate was that of *Imperium*, or command. Only Consuls and Praetors wielded this power: the constitutional authority to issue commands, both military and otherwise. Most magistrate offices had one-year terms, and once a term was up, the magistrate theoretically waited ten years before serving in that office once again. Of

course, in practice, magistrates overruled this rule, extending their powers.

All magistrates, regardless of their position, wielded the power of *coercion*, which gave elected officials a broad array of powers to maintain peace and order. The check on this power, *provocation*, meant citizens could appeal any punishment while within the city of Rome. Outside the city walls, the power of coercion was absolute. Further, all magistrates saw omens from the gods and made their decisions accordingly. They often abused this power, with fabricated omens justifying actions or obstructions in the Senate.

Quaestor

The first official step in the *cursus honorum*, and the first elected office available to citizens, was Quaestor. Quaestor's handled financial administration of the state, its armies, and its officers. Once elected, the state assigned the Quaestor to one of several posts. They could find themselves working as a paymaster for a legion, or as second-in-command to a provincial governor. Young men from particularly prominent families were assigned to the more affluent elected officials, such as Consuls and Censors. Lastly, those elected to this position managed and supervised public games.

While this position often involved a great deal of work in the financial sector of Rome, it also facilitated a relationship between the Quaestor and the magistrate they worked for. This relationship often persisted even when the term ended, and savvy Quaestors carried favor from their magistrate to advance their political careers.

Each year, twenty new Quaestors were elected for a single year-long term. Laws required the Quaestors to meet certain requirements: Patrician men of more than 30 years or Plebeian men of 32 years or more. Although Quaestors didn't have the luxury of protection from Lictors, they carried a fasces while outside the city. Election to this position conferred immediate Senate membership.

Aedile

At 36 years of age, a *proquaestor* — those who held the position of Quaestor — stood for election to one of six Aedile positions. Each year, two Patrician Curule Aediles were either elected by the Tribal Assembly or appointed by the reigning Consul. The Plebian Council elected two Plebian Aediles. The Emperor created the final position, the Cereales Aediles, charged them with managing the grain supply of the Empire. One of the Consuls typically chose the Cereales Aediles from the Plebian class.

While each Aedile office carried its own rights and responsibilities, every Aedile was charged with care of the city, care of provisions, and care of the games. Their administrative tasks also ranged from upkeep of temples to organizing games and festivals. Moreover, they managed all of Rome's water and food supplies. In their capacity as market superintendents, they were sometimes called to act as judges in mercantile affairs. Aediles worked closely with Censors and Quaestors to ensure public festivals and events occurred, with each respective office managing separate Patrician and Plebeian events. As Aediles received no reimbursement for public expenses, those vying for the position were wealthy enough to throw the lavish affairs expected by the citizens of Rome. Those interested in becoming an Aedile were thought to be capable of bearing the accompanying financial burden, but many young citizens found themselves deep in debt after financing lavish state affairs.

Unlike other positions within the *cursus honorum*, Aedile was not a requirement for higher office. However, holding this position meant a person took serious interest in further advancement within Roman politics, creating a platform for a public persona.

Praetor

Once a citizen successfully held the office of Quaestor or Aedile and was 39 years old, they could run for Praetor. This position oversaw judicial

functions throughout Rome, though military commanders still occasionally utilized it. Praetors oversaw trials, granted court orders, or administered justice as needed. Election to this position brought a great deal of esteem, along with an escort of six Lictors. Only a Consul had the power to veto a Praetor's proclamation. Once a Praetor's term ended, the state named them governor and assigned them to a province. When a Consul left the city, they named a Praetor to fill the position.

Although all Praetors held a high level of responsibility and prominence, two offices were more prestigious than the others. The first, Praetor Peregrinus, handled trials involving one or more foreigners. During times of conflict or annexation of new territories, this Praetor was often absent from Rome. The second, Praetor Urbanus, acted as the chief judicial officer in Rome. They had the power to overturn any verdict from any other court, and served as the judge in cases involving provincial governors. In addition to their other duties, these Praetors summoned the Senate, and organized defense of the city in case of attack. The Senate required that one senior officer remained in Rome at all times, so these two Praetors could not be absent from Rome at the same time. If one needed to leave, the other performed the duties of both. Further, the Praetor Urbanus couldn't leave the city for more than ten days.

In *Mystical Rome*, the state elects sixteen Praetors each year, a drastic increase from the traditional eight.

Censor

The position of Censor was the final of the *cursus honorum* and the most prestigious. At the beginning of each *lustrum*, or five-year period, the Censorial Assembly elected two new Censors. They served in the position for 18 months, and were reaffirmed to serve the rest of the term. To be considered for this position, a citizen first served a term as Consul, served in the Senate for an extended period, or

performed another long and vital service to the city of Rome.

This office was the highest honor one achieved, not only for the role they played in helping to administer state finances, but for the duty of *Regimen Morum*—control over the conduct and morals of the citizens of Rome. Additionally, Censors conducted a regular census of the population, enrolled new citizens in tribes and voting classes, and removed untrustworthy members from the Senate. Unlike other high-ranking officials, Censors did not have Lictors. Despite this, they received great deal of respect, as many viewed the duty of managing the census of greatest import to the Empire. The power of the Censor was absolute, and only another who filled that position could overturn a past decree.

Occasionally, Censors ventured from Rome in order to take a full accounting of citizens within far-flung provinces. *Regimen Morum* was also often hotly debated. Though Censors had the power to punish those who didn't fit within their definition of "moral behavior," no oversight for those actions existed. Each Censor followed only their own principles.

Local Municipalities: The Fourteen Regions of Rome

According to ancient tradition, the sixth king of Rome—Servius Tullius—divided the city into four regions managed by his office. This remained unchanged from the dawn of the Republic until Emperor Caesar, and his co-Consul Octavius, revised the system into a more efficient model of government. Rome then worked as efficiently as any of her legions out in the world. This section features a brief review, and a couple of historical details, to help Directors create a sandbox for the cast to explore.

Rome was one of the largest metropolitan cities in the world. Octavius designed these 14 regions as densely populated urban centers for maximum efficiency within political boundaries. Think of each region as a large urban city within the overall Republic. New York has five similar boroughs, and these regions are akin to the five Boroughs of New York: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Rome began as a small kingdom, expanding and absorbing the areas and people around them. Ancient walls and gates called *Portas* bordered the

regions, and Augustus used these natural borders to organize Rome. It eliminated a great of waste and vastly improved the people's lives. Originally, Rome designated these regions via a numeric schema, but over time they all acquired nicknames based on the landmarks and buildings of interest within the region. Each region has their own unique set of lower magistrate offices and centuries as defined by the census.

Writer's Room Commentary: Creative License

Some of these storied landmarks and legendary neighbors have dozens-upon-dozens books written about them. This Genre doesn't have the space to capture all of these details, so we used short descriptions to invoke a sense for these neighborhoods without forcing Directors or players to perform hours of research.

Region I: Porta Capena

The Porta Capena was the primary gate in the Servian Wall, near the Caelian Hill, and the best choke point for foreign invaders attempting to breach the Eternal City's walls. Legend stated this spot once contained the sacred grove where King Numa Pompilius met with the nymph Egeria, and they conducted their illicit romance. A well at the Porta Capena provided holy water for the yearly Mercuralia ceremony, and both the Cornelii and Claudi revered this well due to their house gods and familial history.

Caelian Hill was the fashionable residential district of the wealthy wishing to dabble in a bohemian lifestyle, away from the disapproving glares of the more conservative regions. This region hosted some of the most notorious, ostentatious orgies and feasts with rare and expensive animals. The Imperator rewarded some of his best soldiers with residences there. Not only did these veterans receive luxurious homes, but their presence helped secure the city gates. Despite the lavish villas, this sacred Region allowed beggars, and charity given there honored the gods.

The gate—and its creation of a major route to Rome's primary trading partner, Capua—made it respectable for proper Romans to ply their trade here instead of the forum, especially if it extended outside of the city. A large number of warehouses lined the Servian walls, holding goods as needed before transport.

Region II: Caelimontium

Caesar's reforms created the Caelimontium to secure the ancient portion of the Caelian Hill—one of Rome's famous seven hills. This served the major Patrician families as a public form of tribute to the social foundations of Rome, assuring their loyalty. Some openly joked that such opulent villas were hotbeds of skullduggery and murder, with the Patrician families competing with each other over land rights and noble claims. More than one paterfamilias took his last breath in a quiet gasp in some dark alley of the Caelimontium, over the attempt to seize his lands.

Living in this region was a mark of character, especially for those of the lower class that scraped a living here, even as servants. Caesar called it the soul of Rome in a speech advocating for traditional Roman virtues and family life for a new era of the Republic. Life was pleasant as a high number of public baths, libraries, and even one of the first urban parks in the known world existed here.

The Ludus Matutinus was the grand tourist destination of this region, a famous gladiator school that produced legends in the arena. Mothers took their children here and sometimes purchased the sweat from the gladiators to serve as a cure-all tonic.

Region III: Isis and Serapis

Region III was Isis and Serapis, named for the twin temples to these foreign gods. The structures honored the shared history of Rome and Alexandria, and their cultural ancestry through Greece. This region moved along Labicana Street and parts of the Oppian and Esquiline Hills. This was a wealthy neighborhood where mostly foreigners and unfashionable Patrician families lived side-by-side with merchant Plebian families.

Here, the common people had plenty of food and better living conditions than most. The residents pushed the ugly aspects of the city to the other regions. Neighbors, here, kept their secrets. While it had nearly the same number of fountains, bathhouses, libraries, and other amenities as the Caelimontium, the structures were more elegant and utilitarian. Examples included the Esquiline Hill and its famous Gardens of Maecenas, the first in the Hellenistic-Persian garden style in Rome. A necropolis, near the gardens of Lamia adjoined this building. It contained terraces, libraries, and other aspects of Roman culture.

Upon the Oppian Hill laid the Fagutal, one of ancient Rome's most exclusive neighborhoods. The land itself was worth a hundred times more than any building on the hill, as many of the oldest and most powerful families of Rome began there. To hold onto such a legacy implied that a family possessed a stake in the future of Rome. Both the glorious, and some say ostentatious, Domus Aemilium (House of the Aemilii) and the revered Domus Sulpicia (House of the Sulpicii) resided there.

Region IV: The Temple of Peace

The region known as the Temple of Peace stretched out to include the entire valley between the Esquiline and Viminal Hills. This included the "working middle-class" neighborhood of the Subura, just on the edge of where the slums began to spread and where the Emperor himself was born.

The Flavian Amphitheatre, constructed of concrete and sand, was the largest amphitheater in the known world. This region was famous for her art, brilliant temples, and religious and secular holidays. Here, the eyes of the entire republic watched as stars rose and fell in the street plays, vibrating with the pulse of the mob, and literally reading the writing on the wall (**see Reference Material: A Primer on the Culture and Traditions of Rome: Poetic Warfare**, page xx.).

The residents rarely saw violence, despite the open mingling of the mob, since the numerous temples and festivities made the area the center of attention. Those who believed in the divinity of the Republic pointed to this region as a model for the whole of the empire.

Region V: Esquiline Hill

This region featured the posh, respectable parts of the Esquiline, Oppian, and Cispius Hills, where rich and influential built oldest and largest villas of the Eternal City hundreds of years ago. Living here was a status symbol, no matter the social class. Residence in this area said a person was a respected citizen of Rome, because they were Rome itself.

Past architects built the forum of the Julii here. A number of minor hills and crests each held their own stories and myths. Residents called the Velia the Summa Sacra Via ("Summit of the Sacra Via") as it was the beginning of the traditional pilgrimage down the hill to the Arch of Titus and Temple of Venus and

Roma. Notable buildings included the Temple of the Penates and the Domus Valerriorum (House of the Valerii), and its famous doors that blocked the streets. The Valerii could withstand a siege and strategically placed soldiers when needed.

The Sabines once owned the small village that became the Quirinal Hill. King Titus Tatius lived there to secure the peace and allowed them to build altars to honor their god Quirinus (naming the hill by this god), trying to be the good neighbors of proper Roman virtue.

Cispian Hill blighted this area. Named for Cispus Laevus of Anagnina, of the Publilia voting century, this area was unwholesome, and frequented by the destitute and the degenerate. Collegia held underground chariot races through crowded streets, laughing while the homeless scattered before them. The lawless streets gave Patricians a glimpse of the dark side of the city, all without putting themselves in danger by visiting the Aventine. The downfall of this hill came when the Three Soothsayers burned down the Janiculum: a temple where the augurs met. Many believed the location cursed, but it did not stop the underworld elements of the city from taking advantage of the flight of Patricians and Plebeians.

Region VI: Alta Semita

Named for the grand street, the Alta Semita ("the high path"), that ran through Quirinal Hill, along the Viminal Hill, and the lower slopes of the Pincian, residents visited this region for its vast public, urban gardens; markets; temples; and libraries.

Gnaeus Pompey Magnus once made this place his home, doting on the neighborhoods of his birth and boyhood. After his great successes in war, Pompey built the Horti Pompeiani, the largest urban park at the time, complete with aqueducts and a grand theatre. He also spent the coin to plant a private set of gardens as a mirror to his grand achievement on the 'Carinae' slope of the Esquiline Hill. This surrounded Pompey's personal villa, known as the 'Domus Rostrata'. When Pompey died, the Emperor gave these private gardens to Mark Antony. After Antony's murder by the Senate Liberators, the property transferred to his brother Lucius Antony Creticus. The Domus Corneliarum was on the far side of the street.

The Patricians saw the transfer of this property as an insult, although few openly complained. A number of prominent Plebian families, and their extended cadet branches, moved in and mingled freely with the minor Patrician families. The reduction of slavery within the city limits resulted in a demand for skilled labor, putting more wealth in Plebian hands.

This caused quiet scandal with the ultra-conservative factions. Some Patrician families viewed these changes unfavorably, and saw this region as the battlefield for the soul of Rome. A war of words waged on the walls of the city. The collegium battled with Patricians and Plebeians on both sides of the conflict. Some guilds, such as the bricklayers and engineers, supported the Imperator while many of the old-guard criminal gangs supported the powerful paterfamilias of the underworld, Livius Aemilius Broccha. Many said he was an honorable man, but much like the crocodile, he couldn't help but take a bite out of those around him.

Region VII: Via Lata

Derived from the famous Via Flaminia, the Via Lata region ran between the Servian Walls and the future Aurelian Walls serving as the outer ring of Rome, where merchants traded their wares and the farmers brought their goods to sell. Romans used this area as a business and travel hub between the other regions, considering it a safe and legitimate method of sending goods through to Region XII: the Aventine without having to deal unofficially with the criminals who preyed on them. The Imperator informed the local scum they were to stick to their traditional means of menacing society, and if they interrupted good citizens in trade, they would suffer in the blood pit.

Some of the grand places of interest included the lacus Ganymedis, the temple of the Sun, the porticus Vipsania, the two new temples of Hope and Fortune, the equestrian statue of Tiridates I, and the Suarium Forum. Near the Porta Flaminia, in the Aurelian Walls, was the Domus Corneliium ("House of the Corneli") and a number of their cadet gens and allied merchants. This region was also known for the posh farmers' markets where the wealthy and working class shopped side-by-side without harassment. Not even the most hardened criminal attempted to steal here.

Early in the Time of Kings, the land between the Eternal City and the Tiber River became designated the Fields of Mars. This staging area for the legions of Rome was part of Rome. This location existed outside of the rule that prevented citizens from acting as soldiers inside of Rome, and thus it was legal for the legions to muster here. Some say Octavius included the Fields of Mars so the mob adjusted to seeing soldiers—specifically, the Praetorian Guard—in the streets.

Region VIII: Forum Romanum

The Forum Romanum was a rectangular forum (plaza), at the center of Rome, surrounded by the ruins of several important ancient government buildings. Citizens of the Eternal City referred to this space, originally a marketplace, as the Forum Magnum.

This region was the heart of Rome, the central region, and included the Capitoline Hill; the valley between it and the Palatine Hill up to the Arch of Titus; the Temple of Venus; and Roma with the Forum in the center. In the old days, people knew this region as Mons Saturnius, and dedicated it to the god Saturn. However, near the end of the Kingdom of Rome, it became known as the Capitolium, named for the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

Historian Livy recounted the popular legend that the name came from the Latin word *caput* ("head", "summit"). The tale was, when digging the foundation trenches for the Temple of Jupiter at Tarquin's order, they found a man's head. Romans considered this place indestructible, and widely adopted it as a symbol of eternity. It was also how Rome earned her cognomen, the Eternal City.

This place and these temples held great sway in the imagination of the people of Rome. According to Livy, the sacred geese of Juno warned Marcus Manlius Capitolinus of the Gallic attack. When the Emperor suffered an accident during his triumph, clearly indicating the wrath of Jupiter for his actions in the Civil Wars, he approached the hill and Jupiter's temple on his knees as a way of averting the unlucky omen. Some believe this was when and where he first met the Three Soothsayers.

Daily life centered on The Forum. It served as the final destination for triumphs, and the venue for public speeches,

elections, and trials. Merchants travelled from across the regions to conduct business here, bribe bureaucrats, and pay taxes to the bureaucratic machine of Eternal Rome. All of the Republic's major offices were located near the Comitium (assembly area), such as the Senate Curia building, government offices, tribunals, and temples. Even memorials and statues gradually cluttered the area.

Region IX: Circus Flaminius

Region IX was a working-class, rough and tumble neighborhood containing the industrial area of Rome, as well as locations where games and races occurred; bakeries that made food for the crowds; and shops for the wealthy to conduct business. It derived its name from the race course located in the southern end of the Fields of Mars, on the west side of Via Lata, close to Tiber Island (and Region XIV: Soothsayer Academy). It featured a small racetrack used for deadly games, an assembly for public speeches, and dozens of warehouses devoted to storing grain, vegetables, and cattle.

The flow of commerce—from the stockyards, delivery of foodstuffs, and vital household items—and the easy access to all of the other regions made this spot perfect for commerce and intrigue between the social classes. When a slumming Patrician wished to show solidarity with the common people of Rome, they delivered speeches at an assembly within the Circus Flaminius. Even the Emperor gave the eulogy of his dearest friend there, sparking the initiation of the Festival of Antony.

This resident made this area rife with intrigue, skullduggery, and espionage. More and more foreigners conducted their business here, and many believed the Druids hid among the rabble and animals. The winds of fortune shifted so often here that even The Three Soothsayers found it difficult to know the future.

Region X: Palatine Hill

The Palatine Hill was the center of the mythic Seven Hills of Rome and the location of the oldest and most sacred buildings and structures. Historian Livy theorized that the original Roman settlers of the land moved here after the immigration of the Sabines and the Albans. Only the richest and most influential of citizens kept any residences here. Often, a senator kept a home in this region for the purpose of business, while his real home was in another region closer to his tribe and gens.

The sacred Lupercal Cave, where the she-wolf nurtured the legendary Romulus and Remus and where Hercules slew Cacus, was located here, now occupied by the Three Soothsayers. The Luperci priests performed the religious rite Lupercalia here, before the Three Soothsayers closed it off for their rituals. The Emperor enforced this upon the penalty of death.

The Temple of Magna Mater held prominence as the Eternal City's first and most important temple. It housed a particular image or form of an ancient goddess, a meteoric stone brought from Greek Asia Minor to Rome in 204 BCE at the behest of an oracle. Many of the clergy saw this place as the cornerstone of resistance against the Soothsayers.

Across the hill rested the newly constructed House of the Julia, built by Octavius to honor his adoptive father and co-Consul. Palatine Hill towered over the Roman Forum to the east and the Circus Maximus to the west. Two temples to Cybele and Apollo, also constructed by Octavius, crowned this hill. Caesar, his Praetorian Guard, and his most trusted sycophants lived here.

Region XI: Circus Maximus

The Circus Maximus, located in the valley between the Palatine and the Aventine Hills, was one of the greatest technological and cultural achievements in the known world. The stadium accommodated up to two hundred thousand spectators, with ample arena room for small army skirmishes and monster fights. During special occasions, the organizers flooded the floor, and the state staged full-sized naval battles or even hydra hunts. The Soothsayers donated a giant obelisk brought from Heliopolis, which stood along the dividing barrier of the Circus.

The Circus was Rome's largest venue for games connected to Roman religious festivals. Wealthy citizens or the state sponsored each ludi, for the benefit of the people and gods. These sponsors held these games on an annual basis to appease the gods, settle bets, or to fulfill a religious vow. In Roman tradition, Tarquin the Proud vowed the earliest triumphal ludi at the Circus to Jupiter, in the late Time of Kings, for his victory over Pometia.

People came to this area for its horse trade, breweries, and skilled artisans. Many collegia dedicated to engineering, construction, glassblowing, masonry, and many other important

groups formed a nucleus of technological might for the Roman Empire. The largest collegia of this region, the bakers' guild, transformed the monthly offering of corn grain to into delicious bread.

Region XII: Piscina Publica

The Piscina Publica ("Public Pool") was a public reservoir and swimming pool located in Region XII. It held high ground and fed into two larger aqueducts. The water canals led down toward the Appian Way, where large numbers of public and private baths served the public and more exclusive wealthy clients. The region itself laid between the Via Appia, the Servian Wall, and the northeast slope of the Aventine Hill.

Several springs fed the reservoir, funneling extra water for industrial projects, such as wool processing, concrete manufacturing, and brick laying. Recreational events, such as swimming contests and sailboat races occurred here, as well as flotilla parties: festivities where the wealthiest Romans tied their personal ships together for orgies on the water.

Public and private gardens grew here, dedicated to state and household gods. Patricians invited citizens to visit these lands as part of the noblesse oblige of the Patrician class. The state expected that a young man entering public life first helped improve a public work in some fashion as a way to demonstrate a civic duty and pride. Cato the Younger viewed this as proof of the divinity of the Republic, and raged when Caesar and then Augustus abused the notion in their attempts to seize power.

Region XIII: Aventine Hill

Romans viewed vices as something outside of proper behavior, sins that weighed them down. For them, the home of villainy laid in Region XIII, known as the Aventine Hill. Black crows littered the hilltop, seeking meals and little trinkets to steal. Residents whispered the Soothsayers trained the birds to spy upon the black knaves of the Aventine.

The Aventine Hill contained the Emporium—the primary port on the Tiber River. The unnatural spire of the Soothsayer Academy loomed in the distance. Rome had a population of nearly a million people, who starved if it relied just upon the resources of the Eternal City and the surrounding area. It was the center of the slave trade and new consumer goods, such as pepper,

cherries, and other fresh new types of food added to the average citizen's diet. The whole of the Roman Empire funneled all of the basic requirements of life through this port.

Few dared the walk the streets alone, much less the alleys. The gangs often had connections to the bureaucratic government of the state and the blessing of the clergy. They controlled the monthly distribution of grain to citizens and helped the Emperor keep the peace. They engaged with the merchants and Patrician families, part of the complex economic ecosystem. Life was hard in the Aventine: luxuries were few, the poor were many, and sometimes one fought over scraps to eat.

Region XIV: Soothsayer Academy

Region XIV was Tiber Island and all the parts of Rome west beyond the river. With complete support of the Senate, and maintained at sword point by the Praetorian Guard, the Emperor granted Tiber Island to the Soothsayers, where they built their Academy. The rest of the region gained its leaders from those who graduated from the Academy. This was a quiet region, where even the criminals of Rome feared to tread lest they be caught before even committing a crime. For more information, see Reference Material: Soothsayer Academy, page xx.

The Empire and Her Provinces

The Romans used provincial and local governments to govern conquered territories without having to rule them directly. When a Roman referred to the Republic, they spoke only of Rome. If they said Empire, they referred to Rome and all of the provinces over which she ruled.

Although Rome ruled a vast empire, it needed few imperial officials to function. This relatively light rule was made possible by the tendency to leave as much administrative business as reasonable to the local government, while granting private enterprises many of the tasks associated with modern governments. The city was especially important within this system, where the magistrates, councils, and assemblies governed themselves and the countryside around them. These cities varied enormously both in population and territory, from tiny Greek poleis of several hundred citizens to the great

metropolises such as Alexandria or Antioch. Despite these differences, the cities shared certain governmental structures and were free, in varying degrees depending on the community's status, to manage their own affairs.

There were also important differences among the statuses of communities, arranged in a hierarchy. Roman *coloniae* were at the top, followed by *municipia*, some of which enjoyed full citizen rights while others had the Latin rights. Lastly, cities existed that had no citizenship rights at all. Cities in this last group were tribute-paying cities (*civitates*), free cities (*civitates liberae*), or free cities with treaties (*civitates liberae et foederatae*).

Coloniae

Romans founded *coloniae* in conquered territory for security, sending their own citizens out from Rome to maintain control. In the earliest periods, colonies fell into two classes: *coloniae civium Romanorum* ("colonies of Roman citizens") or *coloniae Latinorum* ("colonies of Latins"), depending on their respective political rights. At first, the establishment of a colony required a law be passed in Rome by the popular assembly. During the civil discord of the late Republic and Triumvirate, politicians, such as Sulla and Julius Caesar, founded colonies on whim without the assembly's approval.

The state modeled Colonies closely on the Roman constitution, with roles defined for magistrates, council, and assemblies. Colonists enjoyed full Roman citizenship as extensions of Rome. Beginning in 118 BC in Gallia Narbonensis, Rome established colonies their own provinces. From this point, the state used *coloniae* for settling demobilized soldiers and enacting agrarian reform.

Municipia

The second most prestigious class of cities was the *municipium* (plural: *municipia*). *Municipia* were originally communities of non-citizens among Rome's Italic allies. Following the Social War, all residents of the Italian peninsula received Roman citizenship, with the result that a *municipium* was effectively now a community of citizens. These *municipia* operated in the same sort of fashion of a region of Rome. They had their own magistrates' offices (see page xx), and some of the largest and oldest cities had Senators.

Reference Material: The Soothsayer Academy

Redacted

Reference Material: Important Names and People of Rome

This section will be completed after the Mystical Rome Event in September 2019.

Reference Material: Sample Plot Threads:

This section will be completed after the Mystical Rome Event in September 2019.