

# LIFE IN ROME

## MORALITY & THE ROMAN PEOPLE

### THE MORALITY OF EMPIRE

The FOUR PRIME VIRTUES:

- VIRTUS: Bravery, strength of character
- PIETAS: Loyalty, sense of duty
- CLEMENTIA: Compassion, calm, temperance
- IUSTITIA: Justice

## ROMAN STOICISM

- "Freedom is secured not by the fulfilling of one's desires, but by the removal of desire."
- "That which Fortune has not given, she cannot take away."
- "The point is, not how long you live, but how nobly you live."

## Characteristics of Stoicism

- Duty to
  - SERVE the STATE whatever the cost
  - uphold the moral order
  - endure the unfolding of events
  - Live frugally
  - Work hard
  - Respect the divine order
- Conservative
- Paternalistic

All these images  
Aeneas admires on Vulcan's shield,  
given to him  
By his mother, and,  
comprehending nothing  
Of the events pictured thereon,  
He felt proud and happy,  
and took upon his shoulder  
All the future fame and glory  
of his descendants

## MORAL REFORM

Augustus instituted MORAL REFORM

- limits divorces: § 34
- flogged and exiled naughty actors: § 45
- was frugal with food: § 76
- Expected the Imperial family to be PARAGONS of VIRTUE



## OVID

- 43 BC – AD 18
- *Amores* (20 BC)
- *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*)
- *Metamorphoses*
  - epic mythological poem
  - theme of TRANSFORMATION
  - Graeco-Roman religion

## THE ROMAN HOUSEHOLD

- The HOUSEHOLD the core unit of Roman life
  - included wife, children, relatives and even domestic slaves
- The senior male (PATERFAMILIAS) had power to:
  - Force marriage
  - Force divorce
  - Sell children into slavery
  - Control property

## WOMEN

- Marriage and Motherhood HONORED
- Status came from their relationships to men
- Had the same rights as CHILDREN
  - seen as part of a family unit, not as individuals
  - paterfamilias controlled her as other children

## RIGHTS

- NO FORMAL POLITICAL ROLE
  - Could not hold public office or VOTE
- Property owned, inherited but **not** controlled
- Very restricted in the public sphere
  - Limited travel; Veiled outside the house
  - Could be priestesses or patronize the arts
- Allowed an EDUCATION
  - To better raise the children & manage household
  - To make better companions to men
  - To increase moral fiber

## MARRIAGE

- Transferred LEGAL CONTROL of the woman and her property
- Had three different levels of formality
- Often for political or financial reasons
- Between younger women to older men
- Divorce was easy for men and women
  - Remarriage was common
  - Children belonged to their father's family

## SLAVERY IN THE ROMAN WORLD

“Remember, if you please, that the man you call slave springs from the same seed, enjoys the same daylight, breathes like you, lives like you, dies like you... You can as easily conceive him a free man as he can conceive you a slave.” *Seneca*

- 2-3 million slaves in Italy
- 40 per cent of the population
- Not slaves because of skin color or ethnicity
  - Plunder of war
  - Born of a slave mother
  - Debt
- NOT VIEWED AS IMMORAL
  - Just one in a ladder of different classes
  - No challenges to institution
  - Stoicism recognized slaves as human beings
- Slaves could become FREE

## The Function of Slavery

- No real economic rationale
  - Mob of free plebeians ⇒ cheap casual labor
  - Slaves cost to purchase and maintain year-round
- The economy was NOT dependent on slavery
- About power and prestige. Romans liked:
  - the control over others
  - the contrast reinforced the owner as free and a socially respected individual

## After Augustus

- JULIO-CLAUDIANS
    - Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero
  - FLAVIANS, then FIVE GOOD EMPERORS:
    - Heir selected for COMPETENCE not BIRTH
    - Emperor adopted this heir as his son
    - Series of good emperors, e.g. Trajan, Hadrian
    - Ended when M. Aurelius followed by COMMODUS
- ⇒ EXPANSION and STABILITY

