

Roman Society

In ancient Rome the population was divided into two groups: patricians and plebeians.



Patrician



Plebeian

The patrician class were the descendants of the most ancient and powerful noble families. They were landowners, lived in large houses and they had political power in the Senate.

The patricians married and did business only with people of their own class.

Plebeians were mainly artisans or peasants who worked the patricians' land; they lived in apartments and they had no political rights.

If they were lucky plebeians could become clients (obedient servants) of a patrician family. They offered their services in return received the protection of the head of the patrician family, who became their patron.

Society in the Era of the Empire 27BC - 1453AD

The Emperor

head of Society and ruler of all Rome

Patrician families

wealthy influential landowning families

Senators

Served in the Senate and governed Rome

Equestrians

Wealthy property owners who chose business over politics

Plebeians

Working class. Men without substantial wealth who worked for their living at jobs such as artisans, craftsmen, bakers etc

Freed Slaves

Slaves who had either been given their freedom or had paid for their freedom and now worked for their living.

Slaves

Generally prisoners of war but sometimes abandoned children who were owned by their master