

## 1. Site of Encounter: Society (Social Structure)

### Social Classes

“[Rome] had an aristocratic class, made up of the senators [politicians] and equites [wealthy knights]; a poor citizen class, made up of the city rabble and the country farmers about Rome; and then a disenfranchised [oppressed] class, made up of the Latins, the Italians, and the provincials, besides the slaves.”

(Morey, 1901)

### Slavery

“(In the beginning of the Roman Republic) According to the strict principles of the Roman Law, it was a consequence of the relation of Master and Slave that the Master could treat the Slave as he pleased: he could sell him, punish him, and put him to death.

(Under Claudius) The same Constitution also prohibited the cruel treatment of slaves by their masters, by enacting that if the cruelty of the master was intolerable, he might be compelled to sell the slave; and the slave was empowered to make his complaint to the proper authority . A Constitution of Claudius enacted that if a man exposed his slaves (treated them cruelly), who were infirm (sick or disabled), they should become free; and the Constitution also declared that if they were put to death, the act should be murder. It was also enacted that in sales or division of property, slaves, such as husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, should not be separated.”

(Murray, 1875)

## 2. Site of Encounter: Engineering

The Reign of Trajan (AD 98-117)

“Trajan and Public Works and Buildings.—Rome and Italy and the provinces all received the benefit of Trajan’s wise administration; and the empire reached its highest point of material grandeur. Roads were constructed for the aid of the provincials (people). He restored the harbors of Italy, and improved the water supply of Rome. He built two new baths, one of which was for the exclusive use of women. The greatest monument of Trajan was the new Forum, in which a splendid column was erected to commemorate his victories.”

(Morey, 1901)

### 3. Site of Encounter: Trade and Commerce

The Reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138)

“The different provinces of the empire were also brought into closer communication by means of the increasing commerce, which furnished one of the most honored pursuits of the Roman citizen. The provinces encircled the Mediterranean Sea, which was now the greatest highway of the empire. The sea was traversed by merchant ships exchanging the products of various lands. The provinces of the empire were thus joined together in one great commercial community.”

(Morey, 1901)

“The wealthy classes vied with one another in procuring the rarest delicacies from Italy and other parts of the world.”

(Morey, 1901)

## 4. Site of Encounter: Entertainment

### The Circus Maximus

“In the latter days of the republic, when the distinction between patricians and plebeians had practically ceased to exist, the plebeians sat in the Circus Maximus.

The enthusiasm of the Romans for these races exceeded all bounds. Lists of the horses, with their names and colours, and those of the drivers, were handed about, and heavy bets made upon each faction; and sometimes the contests between two parties broke out into open violence and bloody quarrels, until at last the disputes which originated in the circus, had nearly lost the Emperor Justinian his crown.”

(Gibbon, 1776 )

### The Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheatre)

“When a gladiator was wounded, the people called out habet or hoc habet; and the one who was vanquished lowered his arms in token of submission. His fate, however, depended upon the people, who pressed down their thumbs if they wished him to be killed, and ordered him to receive the sword, which gladiators usually did with the greatest firmness.”

(Smith, 1853)

## 5. The poor of the Roman Empire

Everyday life:

“Poverty throughout the city was apparent, whether through one’s lack of education or manner of dress, and life in these tenements reflected this disparity. The floor on which a person lived depended on one’s income. The lower apartments - the ground floor or first floor of an insulae - were far more comfortable than the top floors. They were spacious, containing separate rooms for dining and sleeping, glazed windows, and, unlike the other floors, the rent was usually paid annually. The higher floors, where rent was paid by the day or week, were cramped, often with only one room to a family. A family lived in constant fear of eviction. They had no access to natural light, were hot in the summer and cold in the winter with little or no running water - this even meant a latrina or toilet. While the city’s first sewer system or Cloaca Maxima had appeared in the sixth century BCE, it did not benefit those on the upper floors (lower floors had access to running water and indoor toilets). Refuse, even human waste, was routinely dumped onto the streets, not only causing a terrible stench but a breeding ground for disease. For many, the only alternative was to use the public toilets. Combine the lack of street lights (there was no foot traffic at night due to the high crime rate), the decaying buildings, and the fear of fire, life on the upper floors of the tenements was not very enjoyable for many of the poor.”

(Wasson, 2013)