



Which of these is Paleolithic, Neolithic and Mesopotamian. Why?

What is the thematic link between them?

# The Art of Imperial Rome

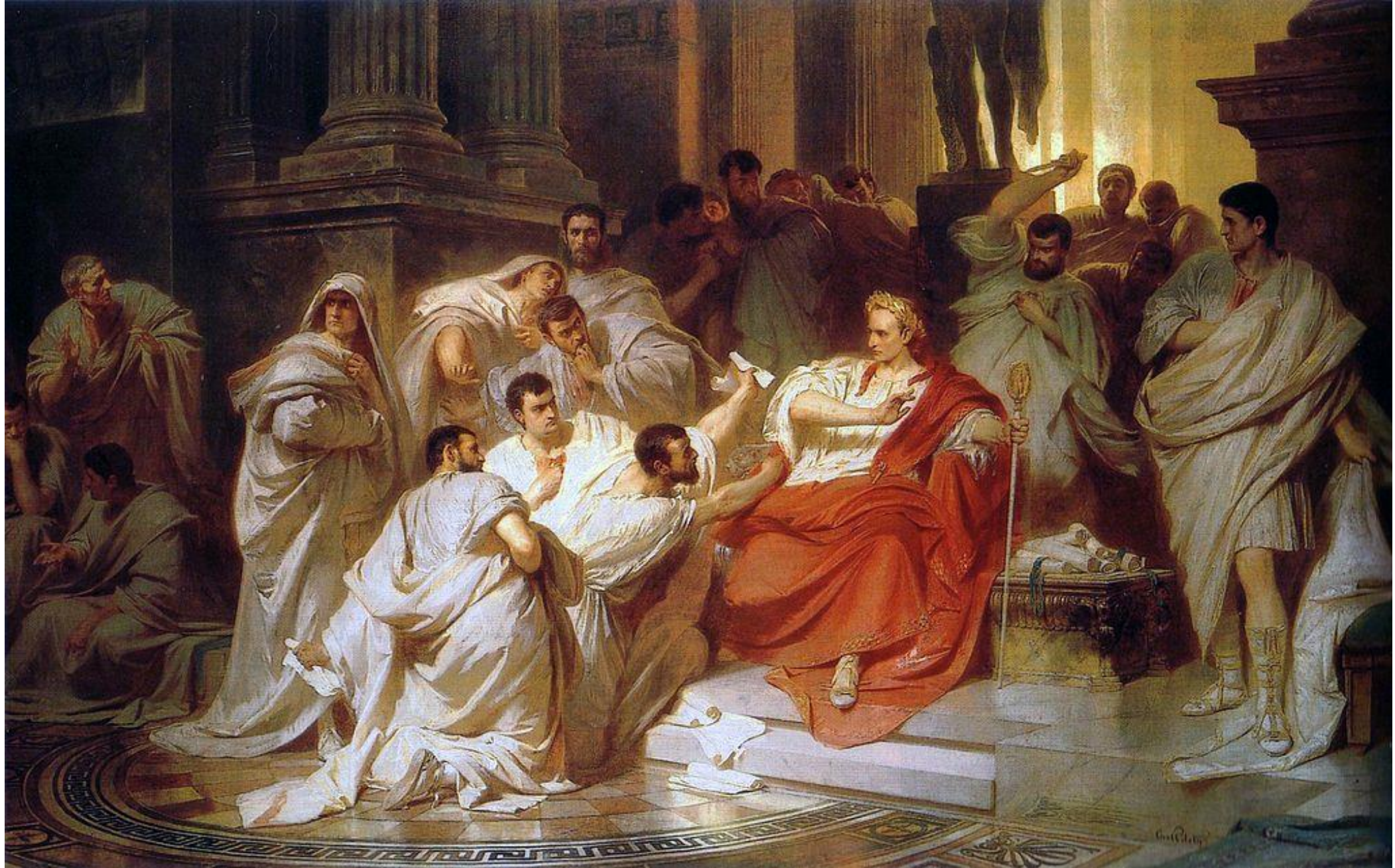


A brief history of Rome....



Giambologna, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, 1583, marble,  
Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence





Karl Theodor von Piloty, *The Murder of Caesar*, 1865, oil on canvas



*The Blacas Cameo (Emperor Augustus) , AD 20-50*

# The Roman Empire in 117 AD

- Senatorial provinces
- Imperial provinces
- Client states





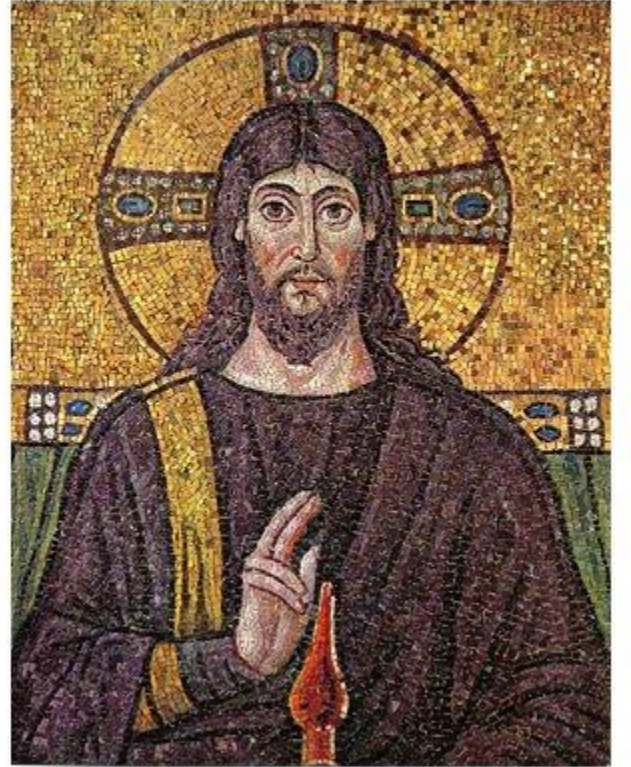




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Colossus Head of Emperor  
Constantine, 4<sup>th</sup> century AD,  
bronze





# Summary: The Origins of Rome

- **753 BC** - Legend says Rome founded by Romulus and Remus
- **509 BC** - Rome became a republic after its rule by 7 Kings from Romulus to Tarquin
- **44 BC** - After victory over Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar is murdered
- **31 BC** - Battle of Actium grants sole power to Octavian who becomes Augustus and the first Roman Emperor in 27 BC (Julian- Claudian Dynasty)
- **43 AD** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Invasion of Britain by armies of Emperor Claudius
- **285 AD** Diocletian divides Roman Empire into Western and Eastern Empires
- **312 AD** Constantine becomes Emperor (Christian) and goes on to found Constantinople
- **476 AD** – last Roman Emperor Romulus Augustulus defeated by Germanic King Odoacer

# Task!

- In your groups, discuss which key event you think is the most significant in the development or decline of the Roman empire

Artistic origins of ancient Roman art

*The Victorious Youth*, 300-100  
BC, bronze, Getty Museum



Praxiteles, *Aphrodite Cnidus*, 4<sup>th</sup>  
century BC, marble, Glyptothek,  
Munich



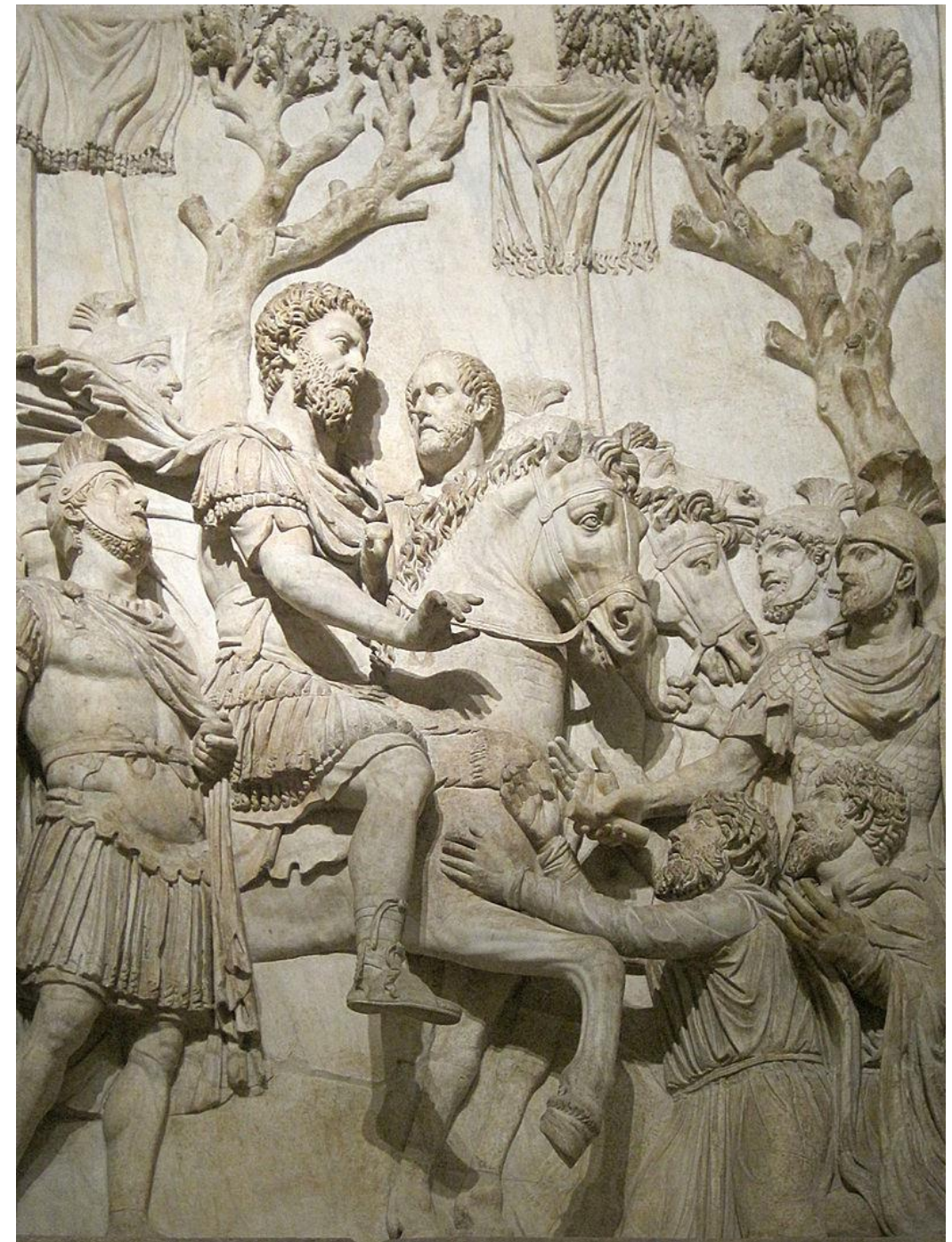




Attributed to Hagesandros, Polydorus and Athenodorus, *Laocoön and his Sons*, Roman copy after Hellenistic original, c.1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, Museo Pio- Clementino, Rome



Statue of Mars, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, from the Forum of Nerva, marble



*Relief of Marcus Aurelius,*  
c.177-180 AD, marble, Rome

# Origins of Roman Art: Key points

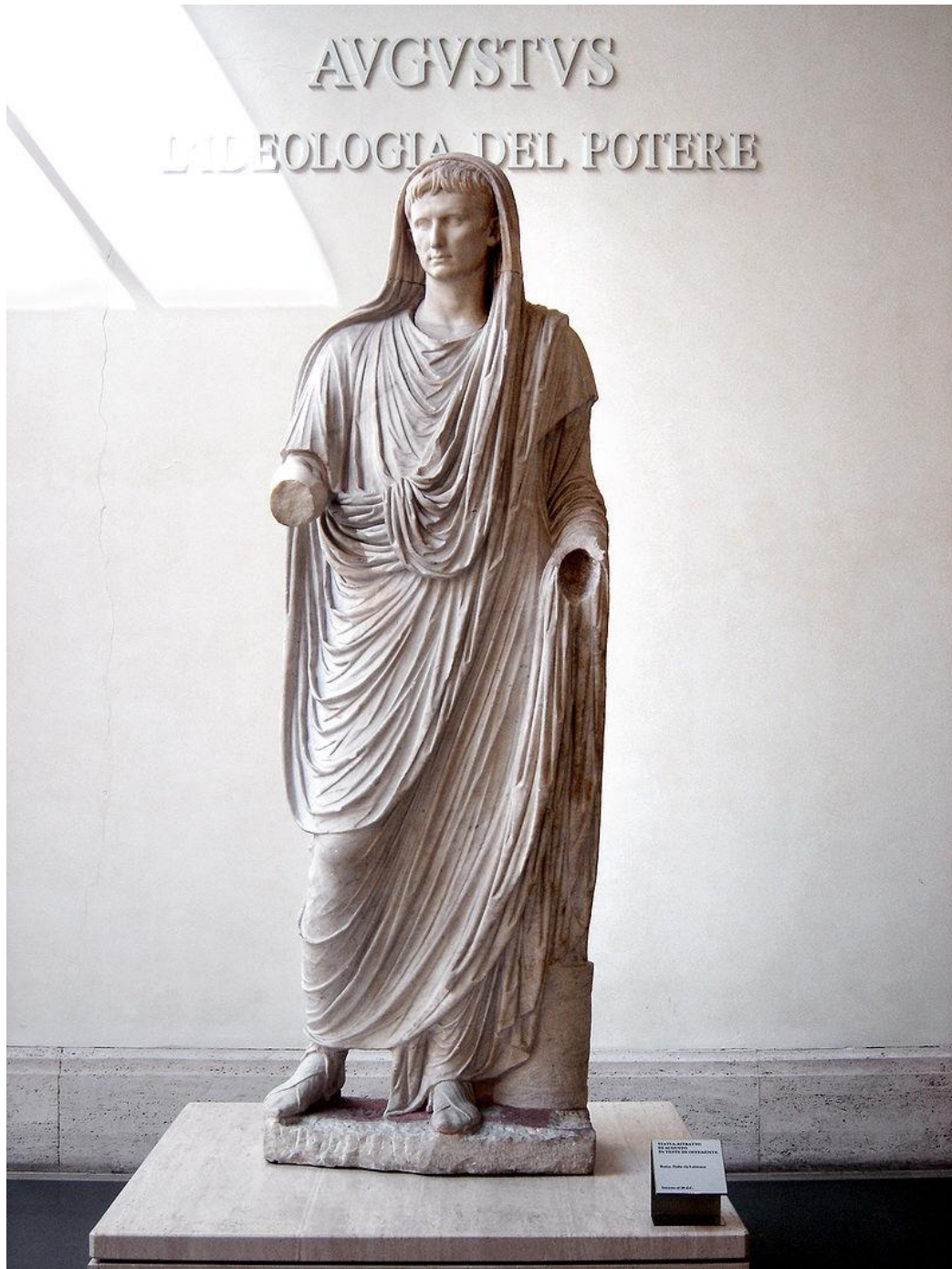
- 1. Influence of Ancient Greek sculpture – idealised bodies and proportions, introduction of *contrapposto*
- 2. ‘Buffing up’ of nude male bodies (see *Laocoön*)
- 3. Imperial art used for propagandistic purposes

# The Augustus of Prima Porta

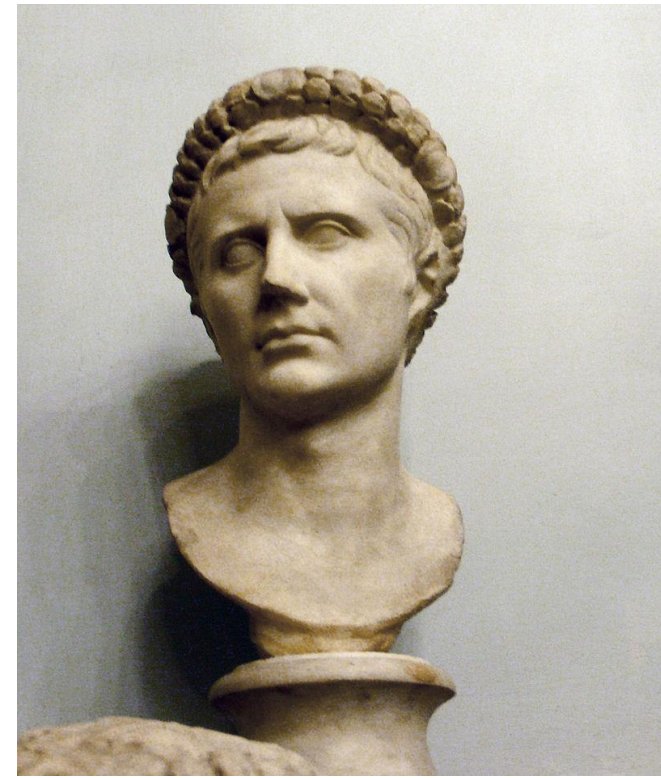


*Augustus of Prima Porta*, c. 15-20AD,  
marble, Museo Vaticano, Rome

MVNIU. PI. IX. P. M.  
AN. XVIII



Bust of the Empeor Augustus, c.20 BC, marble, Capitoline Museum, Rome



*The Via Labicana Augustus (Augustus as Pontifex Maximus), after 12BC, marble, Palazzo Massimo alla Terme, Rome*



*Augustus of Prima Porta*, c. 15-20AD,  
marble, Museo Vaticano, Rome

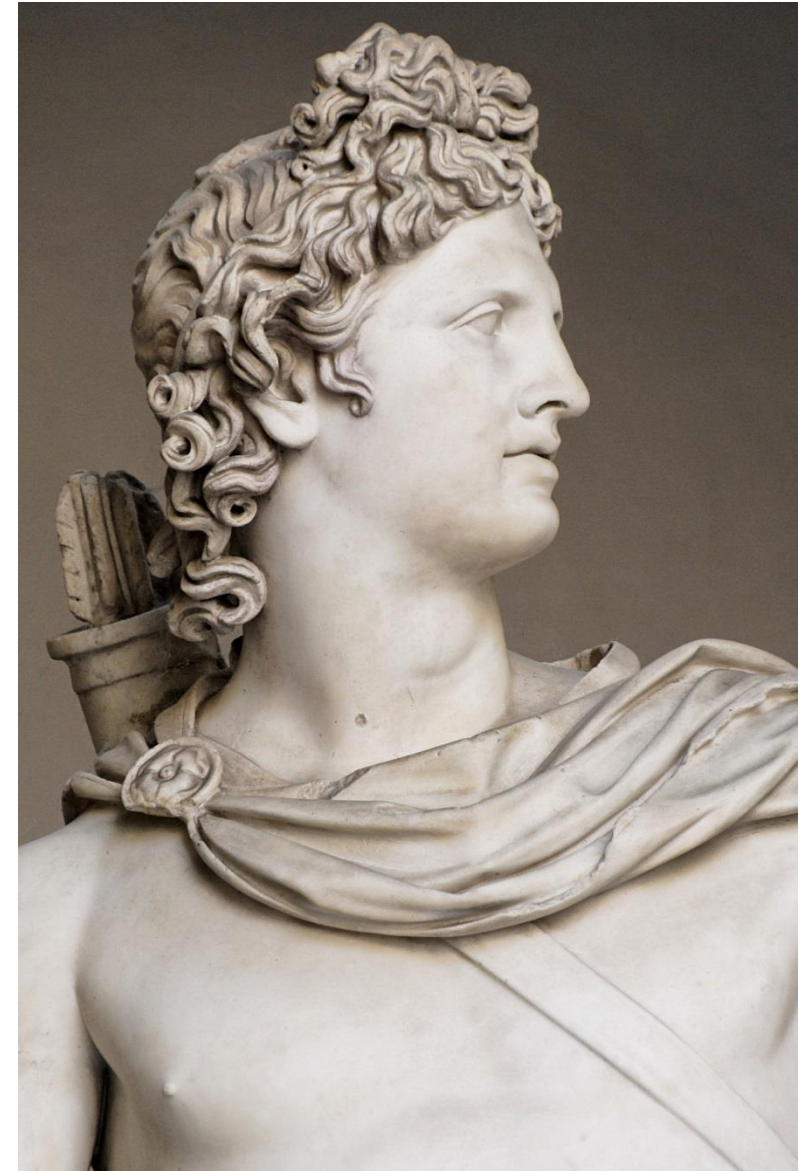
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Polykleitos, *Doryphoros* (spear bearer)  
Roman marble copy of a bronze  
original, c.440-450 BC



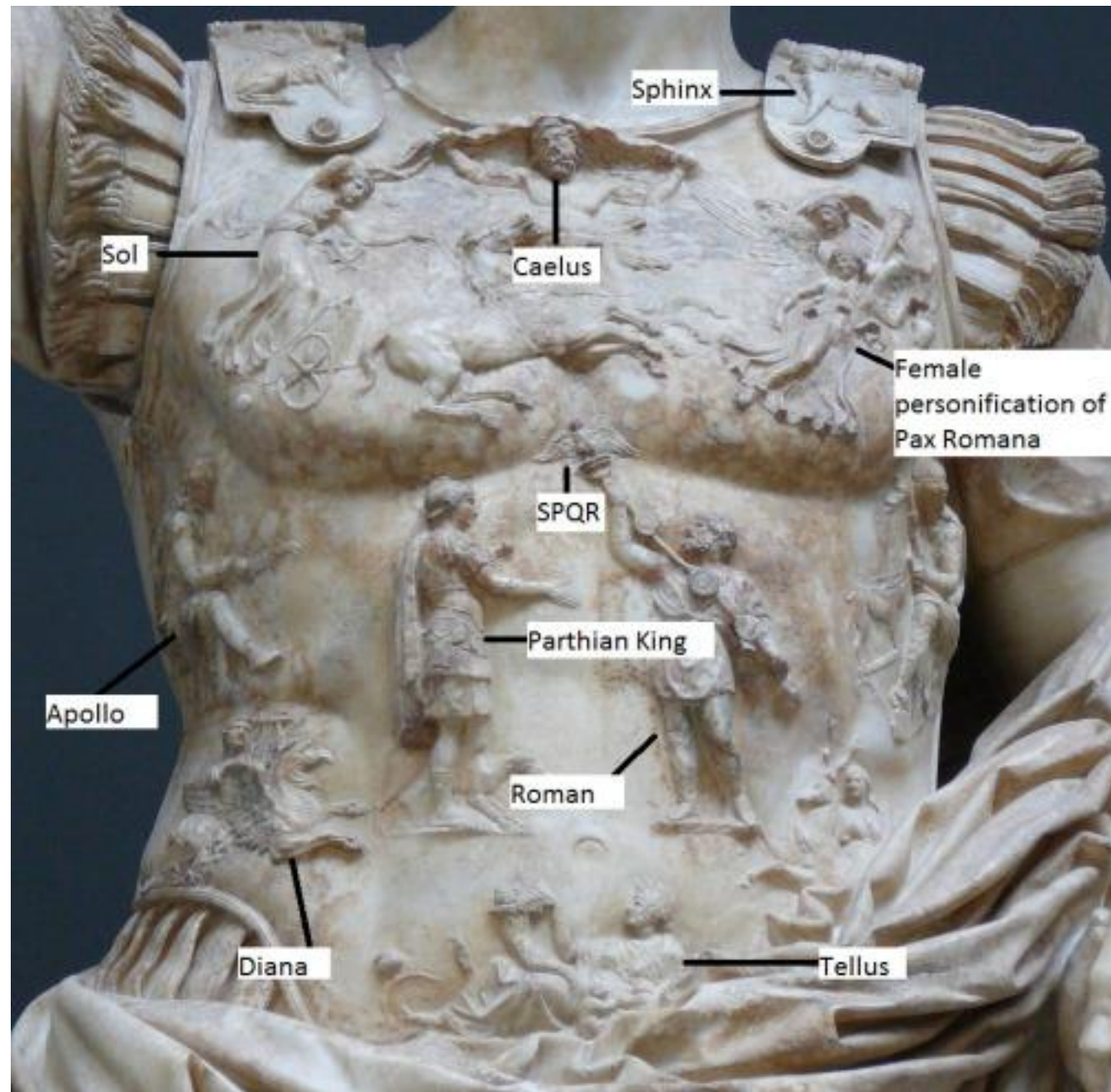




Detail from the *Apollo Belvedere*, Roman copy of bronze original, c.120-140 AD











*Augustus of Prima Porta*, c. 15-20AD,  
marble, Museo Vaticano, Rome

MVNIU. PI. IX. P. M.  
AN. XVIII

# Key points

## Augustus of Prima Porta

- Made after Augustus' death in 14 AD
- Used for propaganda – expresses Augustus' role as military victor, his connection to the gods and the bringer of the *Pax Romana*
- Resemblance to Polykleitos' Spearbearer – young, virile etc.
  
- Dolphin = symbol of naval victory at Battle of Actium (31 BC)
- Cupid = reminding us the Augustus is descended from the goddess Venus
- Cuirass (breastplate) = reference to victory over Parthians (20 BC) and the *Pax Romana*. Includes depictions of deities (Caelus, Sol, Apollo, Diana and Tellus) and personifications of conquered nations

# The Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheatre)







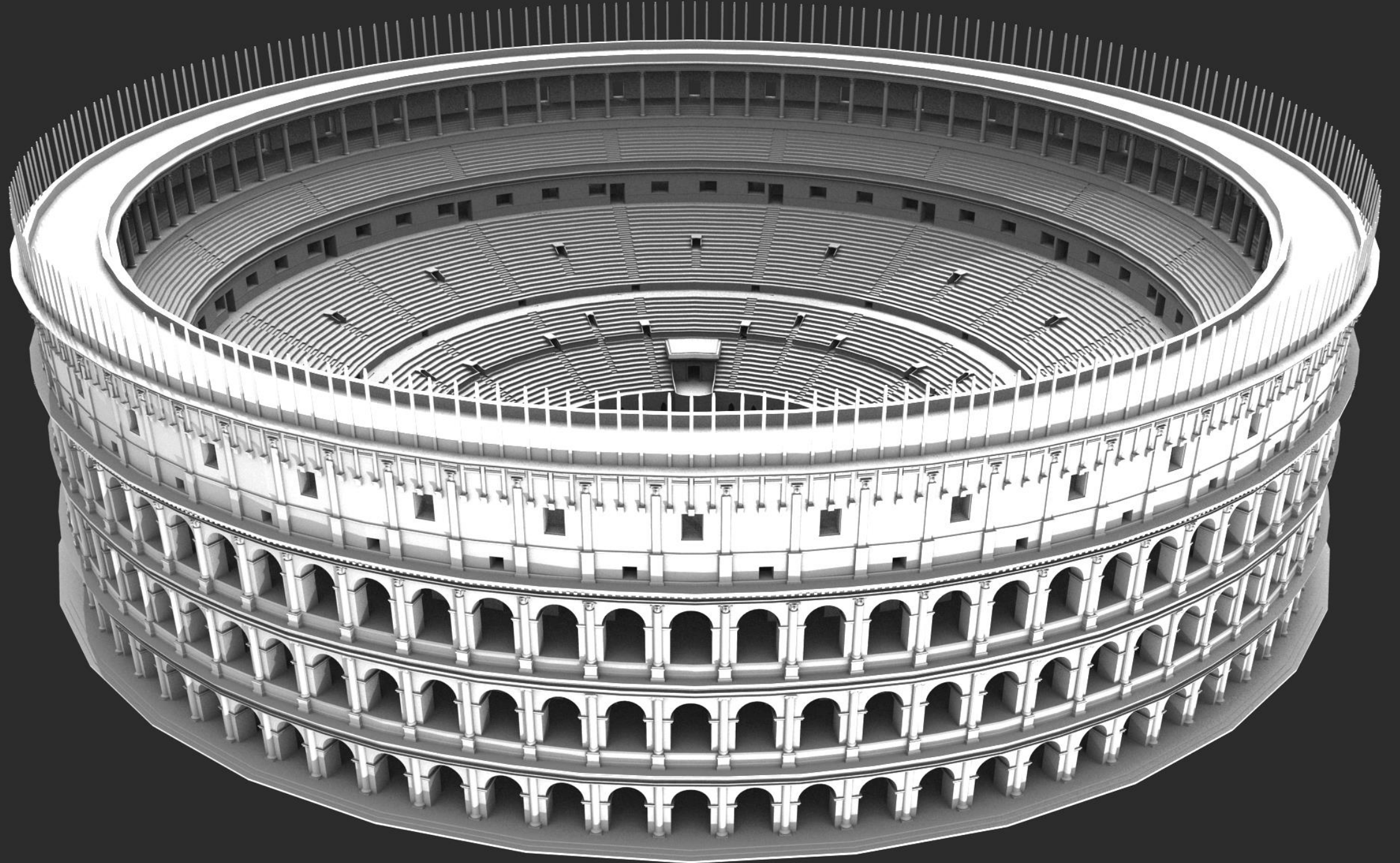
Bust of Emperor Vespasian (r. 69-79 AD)



Bust of Emperor Titus (r. 79-81 AD)

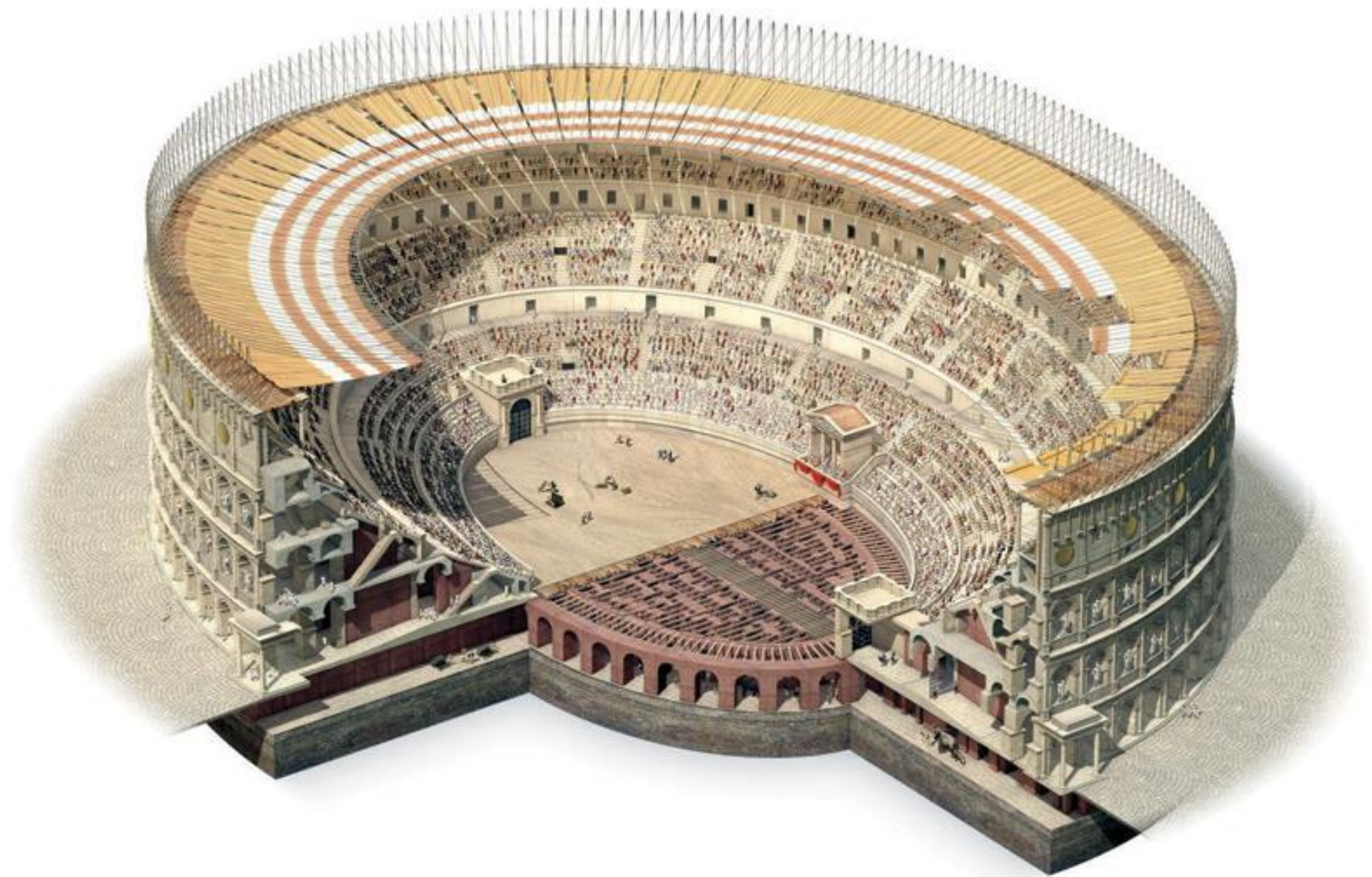


Roman sestertertius struck in 71 AD commemorating the victory in the first Jewish – Roman War  
Inscription reads: IVDEA CAPTA (Judea conquered)











*The Zilten Mosaic (detail), 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD from Libya (Leptis Magna)*

Shows (left to right): a **thraex** fighting a **murmillo**, a **hoplomachus** standing with another murmillo (signalling his defeat to the referee) and one of a matched pair of gladiators.



# Key Points: Colosseum

- Commissioned in c.70-72 AD by Emperor Vespasian as a gift to the people of Rome
- Dedicated in 80 AD by Vespasian's son, Emperor Titus – 100 days of games
- Largest amphitheatre in the Roman world
- Seating for more than 50,000 spectators
- Gladiators = usually slaves
- Could be flooded for 'naval' spectacles and was also used for *venationes* (slaughter of animals by trained hunters) and public executions

# Equestrian Statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius



*Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius*, c.173-176 AD, gilded bronze, Museo Capitolani, Rome



Portraits of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Types I – IV)







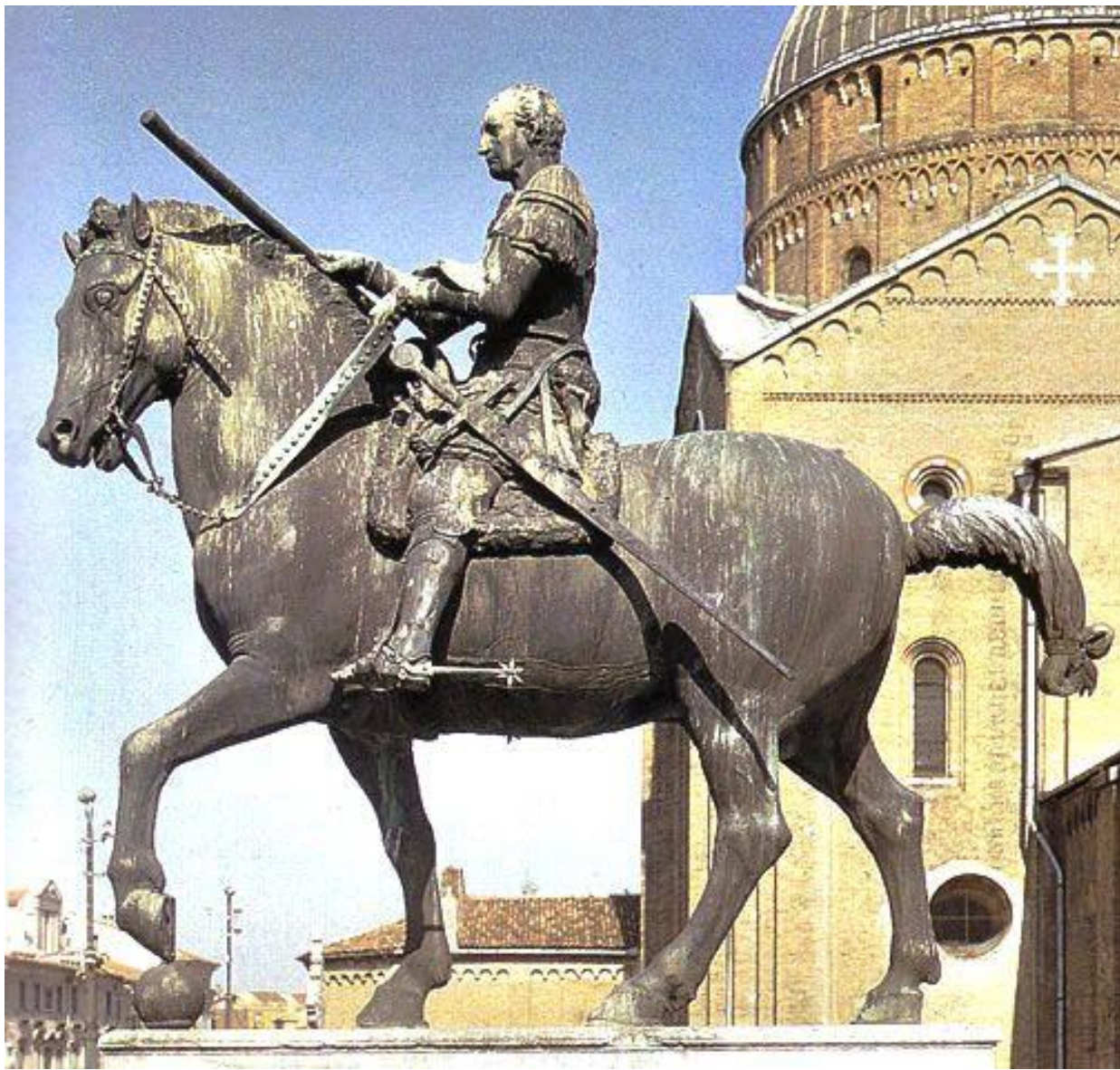
*Portrait bust of Marcus Aurelius, c. 170 AD, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*



Roman bas relief depicting Marcus Aurelius and scenes from the **Marcomannic Wars** (166-180 AD) from the now destroyed **Arch of Marcus Aurelius**, Rome (176-180 AD), Capitoline Museum, Rome







Donatello, *Equestrian Monument to Gattamelata*, 1453,  
Piazza del Santo, Padua



Andrea del Verrochio, *Equestrian Monument to Colleoni*,  
c.1488, Campo di SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice

# Key Points

## Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius

- Marcus Aurelius reigned 161-180 AD
- Statue = over life-size gilded bronze equestrian monument (4.24m tall)
- Cast using lost wax method
- Created post 161 AD
- Hand gesture = adlocutio (about to speak) clementia (gesture of clemency over vanquished enemy) or restitutio pacis (restoration of peace)
- In civic garb rather than armour
- Vital in reintroduction of bronze equestrian statuary in the renaissance

# Summary: Imperial Rome

- Emperors of Rome used art and architecture for propagandistic purposes and to promote themselves to the general population
- Roman sculpture 'borrows' from Ancient Greek prototypes as a reference to the Golden Age of Greek culture (and it's fashionable)
- Use of both bronze (lost wax method) and marble for sculpture
- Roman art vital to the resurgence of equestrian monuments, portrait busts, triumphal arches etc. of the Italian renaissance

Next week....

