

CHAP.IV
(RELIGION AND CULTURE IN ANCIENT ROME)



BY :

DR. BIMAN HAZARIKA
HO.D & ASSOCATE PROF., DEPT.OF HISTORY
DHING COLLEGE

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RELIGION AND CULTURE IN ANCIENT ROME :

Augustus brought to an end of the Roman Republic. He had established unity and good government which the Mediterranean world had never known before. For the protection of the frontier of his country he made legions composed of Roman citizens and also auxiliary forces composed of men from the provinces. He took special care to protect the frontier on the Rhine and the Danube to check the incursions of the Barbarians.

Reforms:

Important reforms were introduced in the government to make it more efficient. He established an imperial civil service. It included the government officials chosen mostly from the middle class and these officials were paid by the state.

In the inner provinces senators were allowed to stay on as governors. They were paid salaries and were under the personal supervision of Augustus so that they were not able to overtax the people for their personal gains.

Owing to peace and good government, the whole of Mediterranean which had become just like Roman lake, was having thousands sailing across it. There was flowing a brisk trade throughout the empire. As the ruins of Pompeii and other cities show, they were full of wealth and prosperity.

Age of Augustus why its called Golden Age ?

Like Periclean age in ancient Greece the Augustan age in the Roman empire called a golden age because it was characterised by conditions of peace and prosperity and development of art and literature. Virgil, Horace were well known literary figures for their lyrics.

Strabo from the Asia minor was the greatest geographer of the age. Athens the well known centre of Greek culture still attracted students from Rome. In religion, many Romans had forgotten their own gods and turned to Hellenistic philosophers or given themselves up to sensual pleasures. The Roman Society was full of frivolity and immorality.

Born from Greek Art

The Romans admired the Greek culture and arts. After conquering Greece, they brought many Greek artists to Rome to make sculptures for them in the Greek fashion. The art of Ancient Greece had a great influence on the art of Ancient Rome. Although Greek art had the greatest influence on the Romans, other civilizations that they conquered and encountered over their wide empire also had influence. These included the Ancient Egyptians, eastern art, the Germans, and the Celts.

Roman Sculpture

Roman sculpture played an important part of the Roman daily life. Sculptures took the form of full statues, busts (sculptures of just a person's head), reliefs (sculptures that were part of a wall), and sarcophagi (sculptures on tombs). The Ancient Romans decorated with sculptures in a number of places including public buildings, public parks, and private homes and gardens.

Roman sculpture was heavily influenced by Greek sculpture. In fact, many of the Roman sculptures were just copies of Greek sculptures. The wealthy Romans decorated their large homes with sculptures. A lot of times these sculptures were of themselves or their ancestors. Other popular subjects for sculptures included gods and goddesses, philosophers, famous athletes, and successful generals.

Above is a marble statue of Augustus the first Emperor of Rome. He is shown here wearing a traditional Roman toga while performing his duties as Pontifex Maximus.

The Roman Bust

One of the most popular types of sculpture in Ancient Rome was the bust. This is a sculpture of just the head. Wealthy Romans would put the busts of their ancestors in the atrium of their homes. This was a way for them to show off their lineage.

Roman Painting

The walls of the homes of wealthy Romans were often decorated with paintings. These paintings were frescos painted directly on the walls. Most of these paintings

have been destroyed over time, but some of them were preserved in the city of Pompeii when it was buried by the eruption of a volcano.

