

# INTRODUCTION

This project started some years ago with a chance email to ICE about a Roman-themed Rolemaster book. Rolemaster has been my system of choice for over 20 years, and it seemed natural to combine that with my love of the ancient world.

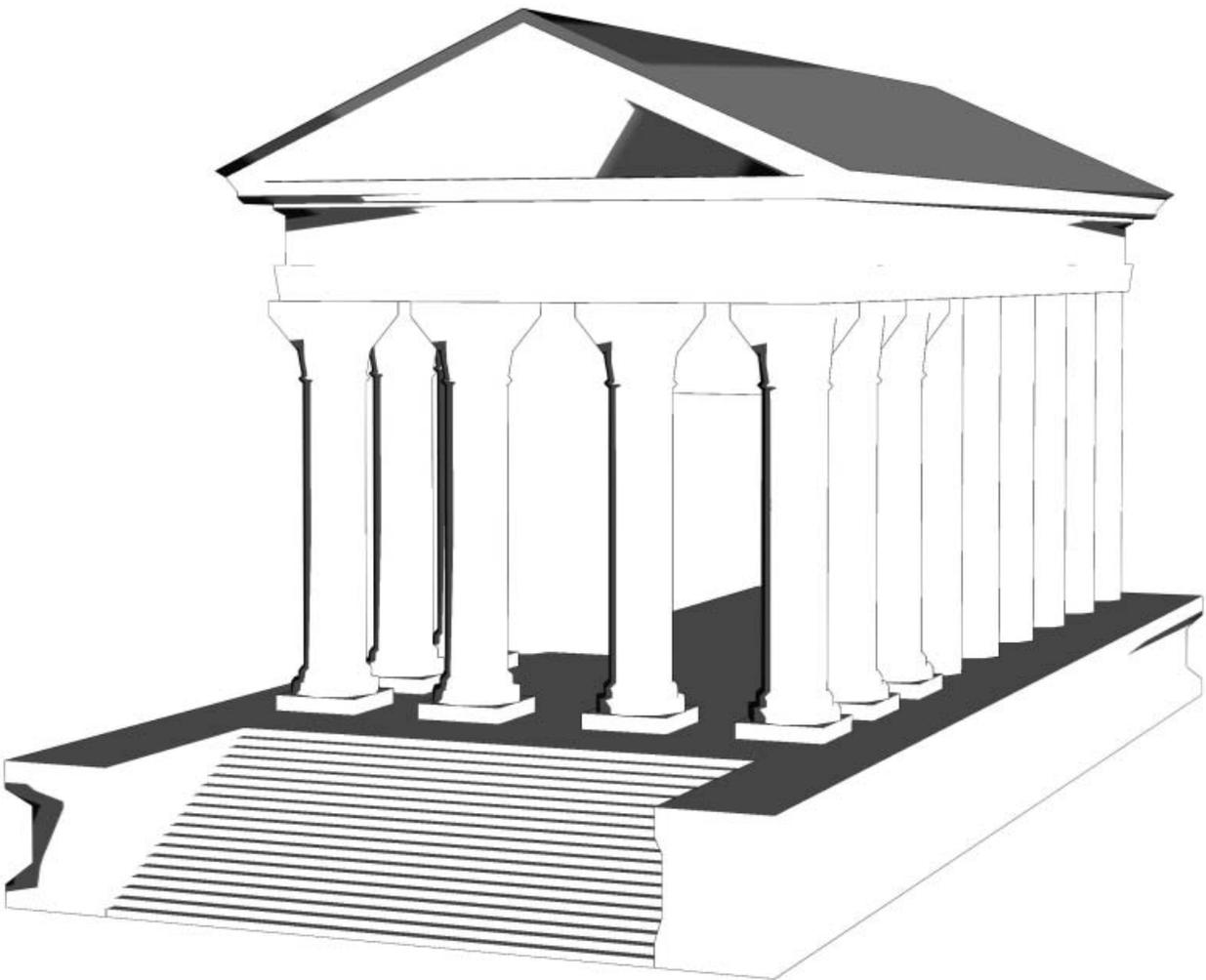
When ICE said write something and we will have a look, I set to in earnest.

The fruits of those labours are now in your hands (or on your screen).

After much writing, re-writing and playtesting (thanks to those folks), this book is finally published, thus making real a long held dream to publish something for the greatest RPG ever published! I hope you enjoy the results and have many hours of enjoyment.

One last note, Rolemaster: Rome is not a history text book. It is based on historical fact, but some facts have been altered or ignored to produce a better game. Thus forgive any intentional or unintentional historical errors within.

Graham Bottley, Oct 2009



# CHAPTER 1

## CHARACTER CREATION

### Character Concept

The initial (and possibly the most important) stage in character generation is to decide what sort of character you want to play. This will be influenced to some degree by the type of campaign your characters will inhabit. Do you want to play a soldier, an investigator, a political climber or a priest? A strong concept will make the later stages of character generation much easier and will produce a more rounded and believable character.

### Race

The next step is to determine the racial origins of your character. For the purposes of this book, all characters will have been born in or near Rome. Most characters will thus be Roman, although Greeks and Gauls are sufficiently represented in the city to be available as racial types. It is important to note that only pure Romans may be Patricians, although not all “Romans” are citizens. A full description of the racial types is given in Appendix 1.

Race	----- Racial Stat Bonuses -----										Background Options
	Ag	Co	Me	Re	SD	Em	In	Pr	Qu	St	
Roman	+0	+0	+0	+0	+5	+0	+0	+5	+0	+0	6
Gaul	+0	+5	+0	+0	-10	+0	+0	+0	+0	+5	5
Greek	+0	+0	+5	+5	+0	+5	+5	+0	+0	+0	5

Once a racial type has been chosen, you should record this on your character sheet along with the stat bonuses from the table below:

### Profession

Once racial type has been determined, the profession of the character should be chosen. It should be noted that not all professions from Rolemaster are available in this setting, although the No profession has some altered skill costs from Character Law. More details on each of the professions is given in Appendix 2. The available professions are:

Non Spell Users	Realm of Power	Realm Stat
Fighter	Choose One	Based on Choice
Thief	Choose One	Based on Choice
Rogue	Choose One	Based on Choice
No Profession	Choose One	Based on Choice

Pure Spell Users	Realm of Power	Realm Stat
Cleric	Channeling	Intuition
Animist	Channeling	Intuition
Illusionist	Essence	Empathy
Lay Healer	Mentalism	Presence

Hybrid Spell Users	Realm of Power	Realm Stat
Sorcerer	Chann/Ess	Intuition/ Empathy

Semi Spell Users	Realm of Power	Realm Stat
Bard	Mentalism	Presence

The choice of Realm of Power is up to the character (See Character Law p20 for more information).

Profession bonuses are as described in RMC Character Law Tables 09-08 and 09-09 (p128-129).

### Stats

Character generation in **RM:Rome** uses the standard rules described in Character Law p22-23, although the GM may wish to use one of the optional systems.

### Social Class

The default social class is **Freeman**. However, characters can change this by spending (or receiving) background options as described below. It is important to be aware that a slave character will probably have serious restrictions, and should only be chosen after careful thought. Full details on social class are given in the “Roman Life” section of this book. This book assumes that Greek and Gaul characters have been brought up by Romanized parents within a Roman setting, and thus use the same adolescence skill suggestions as Roman characters. Greek and Gaul characters can never purchase the Patrician social class, but can purchase the Wealthy option if they also choose the citizen or freeman option. Roman characters cannot purchase the Wealthy option.

Slave	Receive 1 extra Background Option
Freeman	No Cost
Citizen	Costs 1 Background Option
Patrician	Costs 2 Background Options
Wealthy	Costs 1 Background Option

### Adolescence

Adolescence skill ranks are determined by social class. Slaves and Freeman should further choose whether their character has a rural or an urban upbringing. The appropriate list should then be used to choose suitable adolescence skill ranks from:

@ - Languages

Any character of Greek or Gallic origin may spend language ranks on their “parental” language or Latin.

# CHAPTER 3 – THE ROMAN EMPIRE

## Introduction

The Roman Empire is the greatest Empire in the history of the world. This chapter will describe how it became so, how it is governed and a brief description of its provinces and cities. For the purposes of this book, a campaign is assumed to be set around the time of the founding of the Empire by Augustus in 23BC. A note on the Roman dating system is also given to avoid the use of AD and BC.

## History

A short history of Rome is given below. A more concise history can be found in books or on the web, see the bibliography for more information.

### The Founding of Rome

The Legends say that upon the fall of Troy, fugitives under the command of Prince Aeneas fled the ruin of that great city and arrived on the coast of Italia. They founded the kingdom of Alba Longa on the coast. More than 400 years later, Rea Silvia, a direct descendent of Aeneas and priestess of Vesta, bore twin sons by the war god Mars. These sons were named Romulus and Remus. Upon their birth, their uncle (ruling as king) had their mother buried alive and ordered the death of the twins. The servant ordered to kill the babies could not bring himself to do it, and instead put their cradle by the banks of the river Tiber. The river god Tiberinus caused the river to carry them away to the Palatine hill, where they were nursed by a she-wolf and fed by a woodpecker. They were then found by a shepherd and raised by him and his wife.

When they were grown, the two brothers killed their evil uncle, and restored the crown to their grandfather, the rightful king. They then returned to the Palatine hill to found their own city where the Latin tribe could live. Unfortunately, during the construction of the city, the two brothers quarrelled and Romulus slew his brother. He named his new city Rome, after himself, and appointed himself its first king. This took place in 753BC, and is taken as year 0 in the Roman system of dating.

### The Roman Kings

Almost as soon as the city was finished, Romulus divided the men of fighting age into regiments and called them “Legions”. He also appointed the 100 most noble men as “Patricians” and formed them into the Senate. The growing city attracted many lawless and landless men, and soon incorporated the Sabine and Etruscan tribes as well. The city soon spread over the other hills of Rome, as did the lands ruled by Rome. Romulus finally disappeared after 38 years, during a storm and supernatural darkness.

Following Romulus, the next 4 kings of Rome were elected by the Comitia Curiata, or assembly of the people. The fourth king, Tarquinius Priscus (around 600BC or 153), was a great builder and built the Cloaca Maxima (great sewer), the temple of Jupiter and the Circus Maximus. The next two kings, Servius Tullius and Tarquinius Superbus, were both sons of Priscus. However, Tarquinius enraged the citizens of Rome by destroying shrines and temples, and when Lucretia, the wife of a wealthy patrician was raped (and then committed suicide) by the son of Tarquinius, the king and his family were expelled from Rome. This occurred in 509BC (year 244).

### The Early Republic

The two senators responsible, Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus (Lucretias widower) were elected as the first two consuls of the Roman republic. The consulship was instituted with each being able to veto the other, preventing anyone achieving complete power. The exception was in times of emergency, when the senate could appoint a dictator, who had absolute power. However, a dictator could only be appointed for a maximum of six months. The offices of Praetor, Censor and Pontifex Maximus were also created to distribute the former powers of the monarchs.

The Republican period saw the expansion of the Roman Republic with the whole of Italy and territory in Spain, North Africa, Greece and the near east added under the control of provincial governors.

One notable event of this period was the sack of Rome itself by the Gauls under Brennus in 391BC (year 362). The city was looted, before a relief Roman army arrived and defeated the Gauls. This defeat weighed heavy on the Roman people for many hundreds of years.

This period also saw the three Punic wars against Carthage, the other major power in the Mediterranean. The first Punic war (264-241BC or years 489-512) saw the dominant Carthaginian Empire defeated. The wars which spanned an entire generation came to an end when the Roman fleet under the command of Gaius Lutatius Catalus destroyed the Carthaginian fleet. Punitive fines were imposed on Carthage, although the resentment remained.

The second Punic war was initiated by the Carthaginians in 218BC (year 535) when Hannibal attacked a Roman town in Hispania. Hannibal then proceeded to subdue a large part of Hispania, before leaving with a vast army northwards, including his famous war Elephants. He marched along the coast of Gaul, and crossed the Alps, before the Roman armies could prevent it. Once in the Italian peninsula, Hannibal recruited celts into his army, destroyed several Roman armies and established a foothold in southern Italy. The battle of Cannae in particular saw the loss of more than 50,000 Roman soldiers. In 210BC (year 543) Rome appointed Publius Cornelis Scipio to command the armies, and sent him to Hispania to remove

# CHAPTER 4 – MAGIC

## Introduction

RM:Rome is a low magic setting, and thus spell casters are much rarer than a standard fantasy setting. Of course, the rarity of magic also means that spell casters are perceived as more powerful. It should be noted that not all of the spell-casting professions or spell lists are available in this setting.

## Magical Traditions

A character who is able to cast spells from the Realm of Essence or Mentalism must choose a Magical Tradition that they have been trained in. The available spell lists do not differ between these traditions, but the method of casting does. It should be noted that a student may only learn a new spell list from a teacher of the same tradition. A character may only have one tradition, and to change requires losing all spell lists and learning lists again from the beginning. The three traditions are as follows:

### Hellenistic

The Hellenistic tradition originates from the ancient Greek city states and has its origins in three masters from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC: Pythagoras, Empedocles and Orpheus. The Hellenistic tradition is a scientific one, where manipulation of natural forces is used to accomplish feats. The “lever” by which this manipulation occurs is by a focus; a wand, amulet, ring, staff etc. This focus must be prepared personally by the spell caster, taking from 1-5 days to prepare. A caster may only have one focus, and if it is taken from him, it must be recovered. If it is destroyed, another may be prepared. A new focus cannot be prepared if one already exists, albeit out of the reach of the caster.

The focus must be carved with mystical symbols and phrases, and must be held in the hand during casting. Enchanted Foci are possible, but rare as the item must somehow acquire an enchantment after it has been prepared. There are rumours of “universal foci” that can be used by any Hellenistic magician, but it is not known how true these are....

All Hellenistic spell casters begin play with an average Focus.

This style is fairly staid, but is also one of the safest. No target link is required, which can be difficult and dangerous to obtain, and there is no risk from hostile daemons. However, a character must have his focus to be effective, and if stolen or taken, the effectiveness of the caster is greatly reduced.

#### *Casting Modifiers:*

Expensive Focus (200d+ material cost):	+10
Average Focus (50d+ material cost):	+0
Poor Focus (Free):	-10
No Focus:	-25

## Sympathetic

The sympathetic tradition grew out of a fusion between Greek, Egyptian and Celtic teachings, and follows the principle that a physical object provides a magical link to the target. Thus a fingernail clipping or lock of hair from the target, when held by the magician, allows a spell to be cast more easily. The more intimate the object, the stronger the spell can be. Sympathetic magic may also be powerful if the caster is actually touching the target during casting. The strongest form of link uses “curse tablets”. These small sheets of lead have a specific curse inscribed on them, and are then folded over to contain the sympathetic object, whilst the spell is cast. However, curse tablets retain a faint aura of magic about them and can be detected by appropriate means. If the tablet is destroyed (for example by fire), the curse immediately ends.

This style has the potential to be very powerful, assuming the caster can obtain a part of the target’s body, and incorporate that into a curse tablet. However, the curse tablet must be kept safe, and if discovered by authorities could lead to arrest or summary execution.

#### *Casting Modifiers:*

Curse Tablet (in addition to item):	+10
Body part from target :#	+15
Intimate item from target: @	+0
Item from target: *	-10
No item:	-25

# - e.g. blood, tears, hair, nail clipping etc

@ - e.g. Worn or carried by target exclusively for several weeks

\* - e.g. Something touched or held by target for at least an hour

### Persian

The Persian tradition is the most ancient of the three, being Sumerian in origin, but incorporating Babylonian and Assyrian lore. The Persian tradition does not require any physical “props”, but calls upon a daemon from the multitude that throng the earth. The use of the correct words and gestures ensures the correct daemon is used for the spell effect. This tradition is in some ways the most powerful as no amulets or body parts are required. However, failure when using this tradition brings more risks, as uncontrolled daemons can be very dangerous. Any Persian caster failing a spell roll (even an automatic spell) must roll on the table on page 25 (T7) rather than the standard spell failure table. Spell failure for a Persian caster can be significantly worse than the other casting styles.

# CHAPTER 5 – ROMAN LIFE

## Introduction

This chapter describes the everyday life of a Roman, and will cover social class, family life, buildings, political life, trade, food, entertainment and much more. There is a huge amount of information in this chapter, but the more that is used in your game, the more “Roman” your campaign will feel. This chapter is thus key to evoking a Roman game. Of course, as with the rest of this book, use what you wish and ignore anything that doesn’t fit with your campaign.

## Roman Social Class

The Romans have a very well defined sense of social class, and everyone knows their place. Essentially, Patricians are at the top of the social scale, with Slaves at the bottom, and Roman Citizens in between. Foreigners and non-citizens do not really exist as far as social class goes, but they could be considered to be between Slaves and Citizens. The property qualifications mentioned below are assessed at each Census of the Roman people, usually undertaken every 5 years, but individuals may apply to the current Censors for a change in classification.

Children born to a cross-class marriage will always take the social class of the father, unless the mother is a slave and the father refuses to acknowledge the paternity of the child, in which case the child remains a slave.

### Patricians

The Patrician families are all descended from the nobility of Royal Rome, and the Senators that advised the kings. Although these families have different “branches”, every member will be able to trace his ancestry back to a time before the Republic. Only patricians may enter the senate, and to do so requires a minimum property ownership of 250,000d. In addition, members of the senate may not own businesses other than land and property. Thus the patrician families are usually rich, own vast tracts of land, and are very aware of their social status. This very often makes them objects of hatred to the mob.

### Plebeians

Plebeians or Citizens are actually subdivided into 6 social groups, based on their property worth. The Ordo Equestris (or knights) originally provided the cavalry for the Roman armies, but now forms the First Class of Roman society. To be within this class requires property worth 100,000d, but there are no restrictions on business activities, so many knights are far richer. The 1800 richest knights are provided with a “Public Horse” by the state, in memory of those far off cavalry days. Ownership of a Public Horse is a source of much honor.

The Second to Fourth classes are required to have 20,000d, 10,000d and 2,000d respectively. Those without even 2,000d are classified as members of the Head Count, and do not have any votes in elections.

Slaves are at the bottom of the social scale (see the section on slavery below).

### Clients and Patrons

One interesting part of the Roman social network is the existence of the Client network. Any freeman or citizen may pledge to be a Client of another, and thus to obey their requests and serve their interests. In return, Clients expect to receive cash if needy, assistance with employment, favours etc. This network has a big impact on politics, as men with large numbers of clients automatically have a large number of votes. Patricians may be Clients to more powerful men, whilst retaining their own Clients (technically Clients of their Patron’s Patron!).

Women may not be Patrons or Clients. Freed slaves are automatically enrolled as a Client of their ex-master.

Patrons are expected to meet any of their Clients who gather outside their doors at dawn. This meeting is mainly for the Clients benefit, as they are able to ask favours, but the size of the crowd outside a Patricians front door is an indicator of his influence.

Any Client (or Patron) who does not fulfil his part of the unwritten contract which then becomes public knowledge will find himself ostracized by society in general. The Patron-Client contract is considered one of the cornerstones of Roman society and as such inviolable.

### Roman Slaves

The Roman economy, both urban and rural, is based on slavery. Slaves run the farms and ranches, they provide the labour in factories and warehouses, and on building sites. Slaves man oars on board ship and provide the vast majority of household labour. Even the poorest Roman will probably own at least 1 slave.

Some slaves are born into slavery, and indeed some multiple slave owners will actively plan the breeding of their slaves. Any child born to a slave is automatically a slave. Certain criminal punishments require the perpetrator to be sold into slavery (see the section on laws), and this form of slavery is usually for life. Some, especially Greeks, voluntarily sell themselves into slavery. The money received usually goes to the slave’s family, and usually happens when the slave is well educated or skilled, but very poor. Many of this sort of slave are sold as stewards, physicians or teachers. The most common source of slaves, however, is conquest. The losers in foreign wars are rounded up and sold to one of the slave dealers, who sort their new stock into different grades before sending them to the appropriate market. Physically strong slaves are sent to rural or coastal markets to be sold as labourers or oarsmen. Many are sent to Rome itself, or one of the other cities.

Slave dealers are not generally respected or liked, but are an essential part of Roman society. They buy slaves in war zones or from slave dealers on the edges of the Empire and transport them to Italia and Rome. If appropriate, they may also train them, although slaves destined for the Arena