

# BUILDINGS IN GREECE AND ROME

## Fascinating Facts

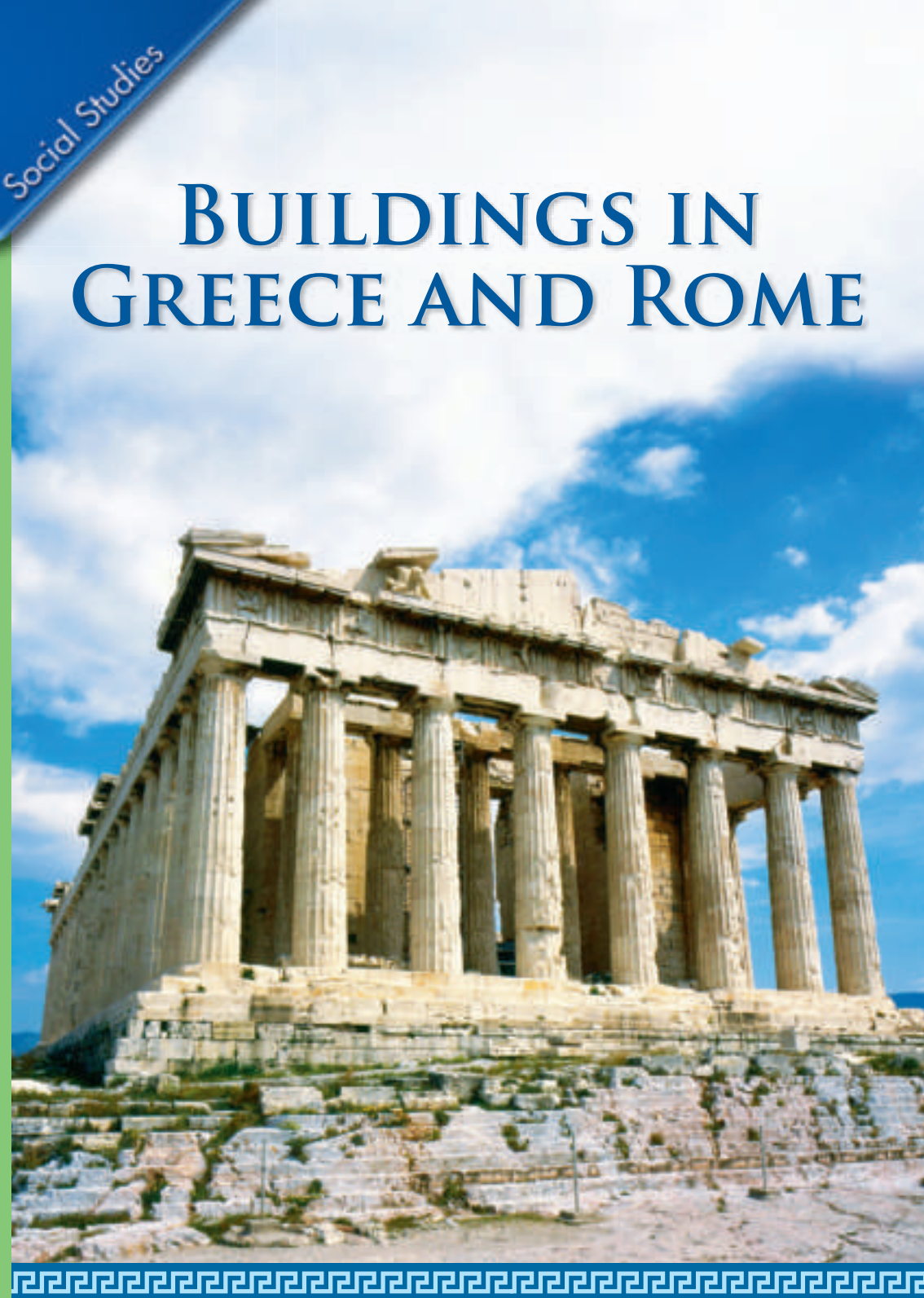
- The ancient Greeks and Romans used pulleys and ropes to create a type of crane for lifting heavy stones into place as they built a new structure.
- Just as people do today, the ancient Romans built “fast-food” shops that sold takeout food and restaurants that offered outdoor seating.
- By A.D. 300, there were eleven public bathhouses and as many as one thousand privately owned bathhouses in the city of Rome.

Genre	Comprehension Skill	Text Features
Nonfiction	Main Idea and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sidebars</li><li>• Captions</li></ul>

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BY TAMMY ZAMBO





The ancient Greeks and Romans possessed great skill in designing and building temples and other structures. These structures affected the way Greeks and Romans lived, and the way they lived affected the structures they built. In this book you will read about these structures and their importance in people's lives.



### **Vocabulary**

**democracy**

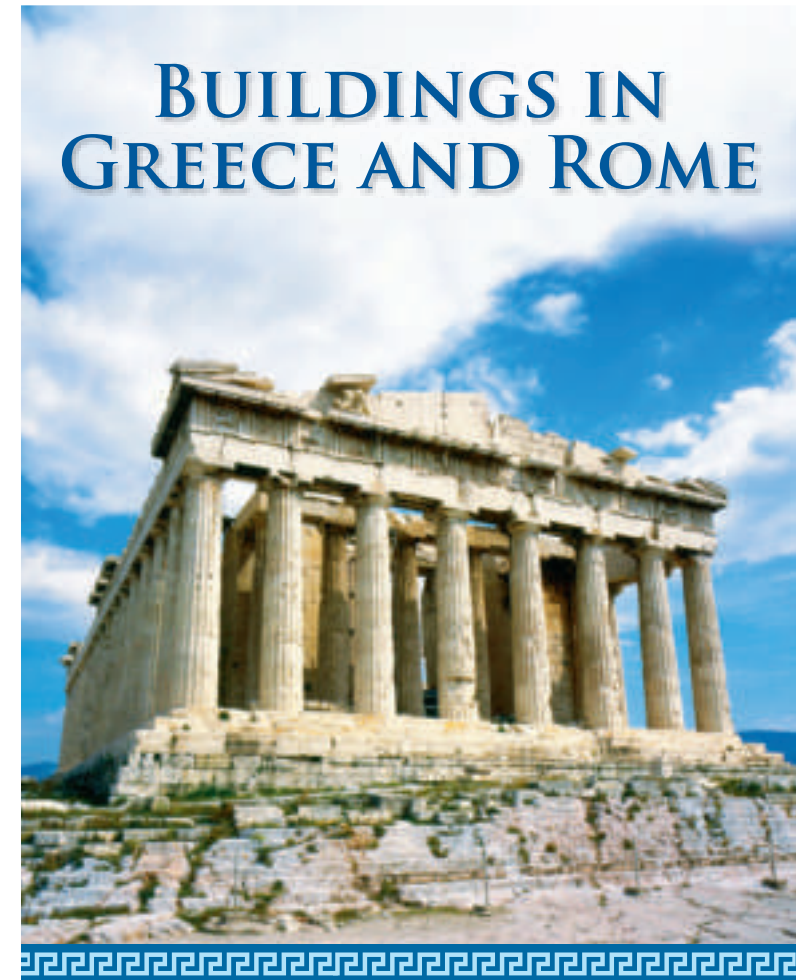
**architecture**

**agora**

**innovation**

**emperor**

**gladiator**



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## Greek and Roman Achievements

Many aspects of life in ancient Greece and Rome still affect our lives today. For example, the United States government is a **democracy**, or a government by the people. Democracy is an idea that was first developed in ancient Greece. In addition, many modern languages are based on Latin, which was the language spoken in ancient Rome.

The achievements of ancient Greece and Rome can also be seen today in the **architecture** of buildings all over the world. Architecture is the art and science of designing and constructing buildings. The way people lived in ancient Greece and Rome affected their architecture. In turn, their architecture affected the way they lived.



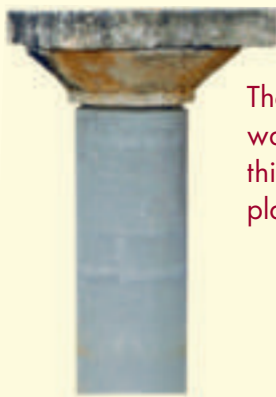
## Greek Temples

The ancient Greeks worshipped many gods and goddesses. They built a temple for each one. The most important temple in the city of Athens was the Parthenon. It was built on the Acropolis, the highest hill in the city. Many other temples were also built on the Acropolis. The Parthenon was dedicated to Athena, the goddess of war, wisdom, and crafts. Greeks also believed Athena was the guardian of Athens. They named the city for her.

Greek temples were not used in the same way as today's churches, synagogues, or mosques. The Greeks believed that their gods and goddesses visited the earth from time to time. The temples were their houses during their visits. People visited the temples only to ask a god or goddess for protection, or on festival days. Sometimes they offered food as a gift at an altar outside the temple.

## Columns and Capitals

Many buildings in ancient Greece and Rome had tall columns that decorated and held up the buildings. Many columns were carved with vertical lines called *flutes*. At the top of every column was a part called a *capital*. There were three styles of capitals.



The Doric style was simple. It had thick columns and plain capitals.

2



The Ionic style was elegant. It had thinner columns and curl-shaped decorations on the capitals.



The Corinthian style was more popular with the Romans than with the Greeks. It was even fancier. Its capitals were decorated with a leafy pattern.

3





## Athena's House

Like other temples, the Parthenon was considered a house. This house belonged to Athena. The outer part of the temple was a "porch" with a row of Doric columns around all four sides. Inside this row at each end was a shorter row of columns. Next was the *cella* (SEL-eh), an inner chamber with four walls made of stone blocks. The walls had an entrance at each end. The *cella* was divided into two rooms. The main room held a wooden statue of Athena that stood 40 feet (12 meters) high. The statue was covered with ivory and gold. The smaller room was in the back of the temple. It contained other statues, jewels, and vases that city-states in the Delian League paid to Athens.

The Parthenon was especially important each summer, when a festival was held for Athena's birthday. This festival was called the Panathenaea (pan-AH-thee-NAH-ay-ah). It was the largest festival in Athens. Most of the people in the city took part in the festival.

One major part of the Panathenaea was a long parade of people and animals through the streets of Athens. The parade ended at the Parthenon. A ritual was then held to honor Athena. The Greeks designed the Acropolis with a lot of open space around the Parthenon. They did not want large crowds to disturb the gods and goddesses inside the temples.



The Parthenon was built between 447 and about 432 B.C.



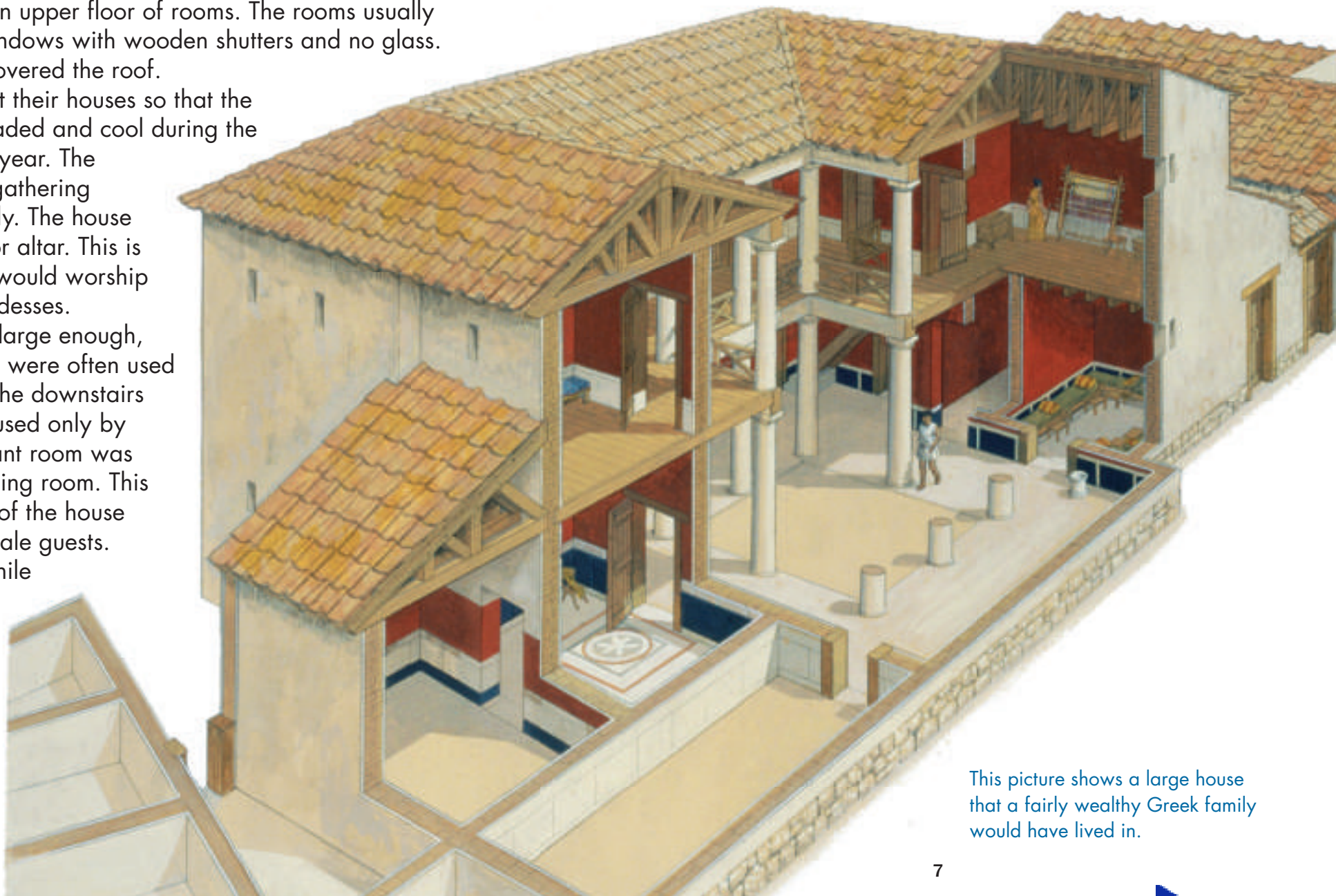


## The Greeks' Houses

The Greeks lived in houses of all sizes. Most houses had a central courtyard with rooms on at least three sides. Some houses also had an upper floor of rooms. The rooms usually had only small windows with wooden shutters and no glass. Baked clay tiles covered the roof.

The Greeks built their houses so that the courtyard was shaded and cool during the hot months of the year. The courtyard was a gathering place for the family. The house also had an indoor altar. This is where the family would worship the gods and goddesses.

If a house was large enough, the upstairs rooms were often used only by women. The downstairs rooms then were used only by men. One important room was the *andron*, or dining room. This is where the man of the house would entertain male guests. The Greeks ate while lying down, so they often used dining couches rather than chairs.



This picture shows a large house that a fairly wealthy Greek family would have lived in.



## The Theater

The ancient Greeks performed the first plays and built the first theater. Plays were first performed in the **agora** in Athens. The agora was an outdoor marketplace and government center. As plays became more popular, however, more people attended. One side of the Acropolis sloped down to form a kind of outdoor auditorium. The audience sat on wooden seats and looked down on a flat stage area. In time, seats were made out of stone and a wooden framework behind the stage was added. Actors could attach scenery to the framework. They could also climb onto the roof for certain scenes.

The most famous Greek playwrights, or writers of plays, were Aeschylus (ES-kih-lehs), Sophocles (SOF-uh-kleez), and Euripedes (yoo-RIP-eh-deez). All of the roles in a play, including female roles, were played by men. In addition, plays included a chorus of twelve to fifteen men.



The Pantheon was built between A.D. 118 and 125.



## Roman Improvements

The ancient Romans copied much of their architecture from the Greeks. For example, they borrowed the basic design of Greek temples. Romans developed **innovations**, or new ideas, as well. These innovations allowed them to design buildings differently.

The Pantheon was a temple dedicated to all the Roman gods and goddesses. Like a Greek temple, the front was a porch supported by columns. Its *cella*, however, was round instead of rectangular. It also had a huge dome on top. Curved surfaces such as these were a new development in architecture.

The Romans were able to build round walls and domes because they used concrete. The Greeks had used only wood, stone, brick, and marble. The Romans mixed stone or brick with water, lime, and volcanic earth to make concrete. Concrete was much stronger than other materials. With it the Romans built stronger arches and curved roofs called *vaults*. They combined these new features to build the round *cella* and dome of the Pantheon.







## Two Kinds of Homes

A wealthy family in ancient Rome lived in a home called a *domus* (DOM-uhs). The center of the *domus* was a hall called an *atrium* (AY-tree-uhm). The atrium usually had a shrine dedicated to the household gods. The dining room, the kitchen, and a study were attached to the atrium. Bedrooms could be located either off the atrium or on a second level of the house. A *domus* could also include rooms next to the street, which were rented out as shops. In the back of the *domus* was a garden surrounded by a row of columns called a *peristyle* (PEHR-ih-stile). A *domus* might be decorated with mosaics, or pictures made of small colored tiles.



### Roman Religion

The Romans shared the Greeks' gods and goddesses but gave them new names. They called the king of the gods Jupiter instead of Zeus. They called his wife Juno instead of Hera.

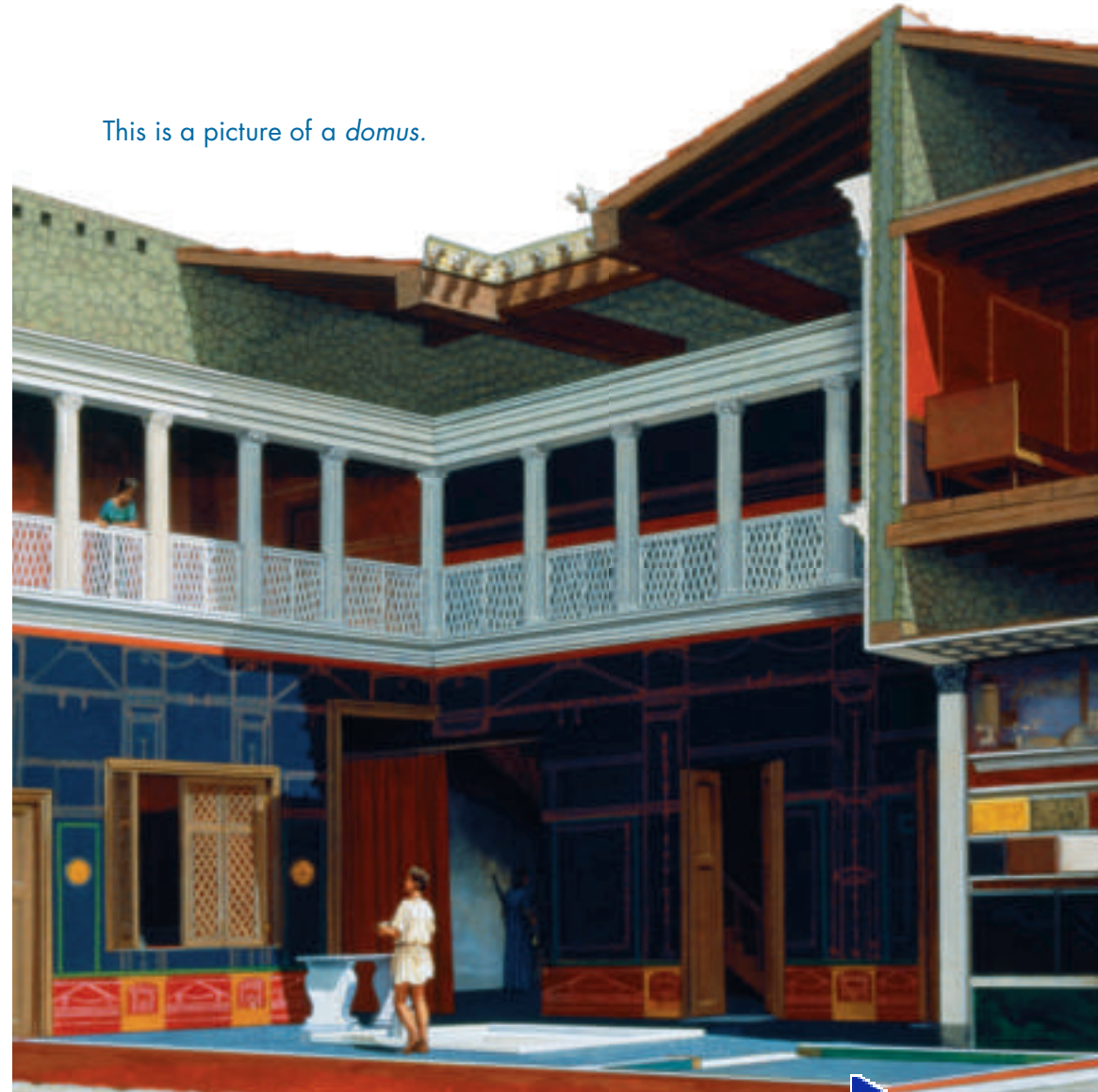
During the Roman Empire, Romans also worshipped their **emperor**. Romans believed in household gods called *lares* (lahr-EEZ) and *penates* (peh-NAY-teez), who watched over the home and the family's food. Each house had a shrine where the family prayed to the *lares* and *penates*.

The Romans conquered people from many other cultures. Those cultures had religions of their own, including Judaism and Christianity. Some Romans adopted these religions.



Most Romans, however, lived in crowded apartment buildings called *insulae* (IN-seh-lee). Many *insulae* were dangerous because they were several stories high and badly built. Fires in *insulae* were common.

This is a picture of a *domus*.







## A New Water System

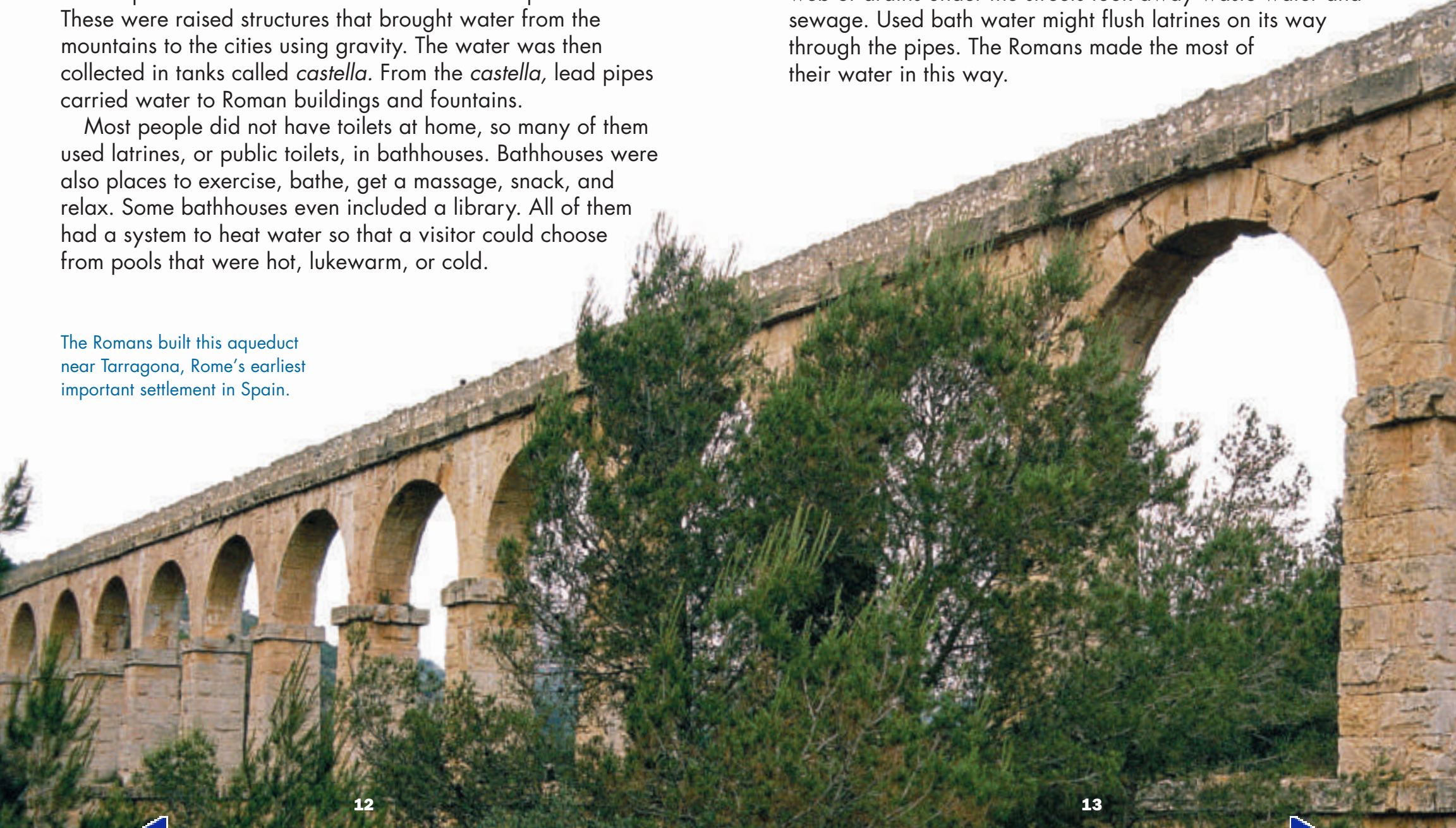
Romans developed a system of running water. They used their improved arches and new vaults to build aqueducts. These were raised structures that brought water from the mountains to the cities using gravity. The water was then collected in tanks called *castella*. From the *castella*, lead pipes carried water to Roman buildings and fountains.

Most people did not have toilets at home, so many of them used latrines, or public toilets, in bathhouses. Bathhouses were also places to exercise, bathe, get a massage, snack, and relax. Some bathhouses even included a library. All of them had a system to heat water so that a visitor could choose from pools that were hot, lukewarm, or cold.

The Romans built this aqueduct near Tarragona, Rome's earliest important settlement in Spain.



The Romans' drainage system was well designed too. A web of drains under the streets took away waste water and sewage. Used bath water might flush latrines on its way through the pipes. The Romans made the most of their water in this way.







## The Circus Maximus

Romans loved to attend events at a huge racetrack called the Circus Maximus. Chariot races were the most common event held there. The circus was also used for foot races, horseback-riding shows, and fights between **gladiators**.

In the center of the Circus Maximus was a long, low structure called the *spina* (SPY-nah). It was decorated with statues, trophies, and a row of large movable egg- or dolphin-shaped counters.

Twelve starting gates were built into one end of the Circus Maximus. At the start of a race, teams of two, four, or more horses would spring out of the gates. Each team pulled a chariot, which was a small vehicle with two wheels. The driver was called a charioteer. The teams would race seven laps counterclockwise around the *spina*. Chariot races were dangerous. Charioteers were often killed or injured in crashes.

Seats in the Circus Maximus rose like staircases around the track. Areas below the seats were built with vaults for strong support. Audience members climbed stairways inside these areas to reach the higher seats. The Roman senators sat in the stone seats closest to the track. The poorest spectators had to stand in the area highest up and farthest from the track. The emperor sat in a special “boxed seat” decorated with columns.



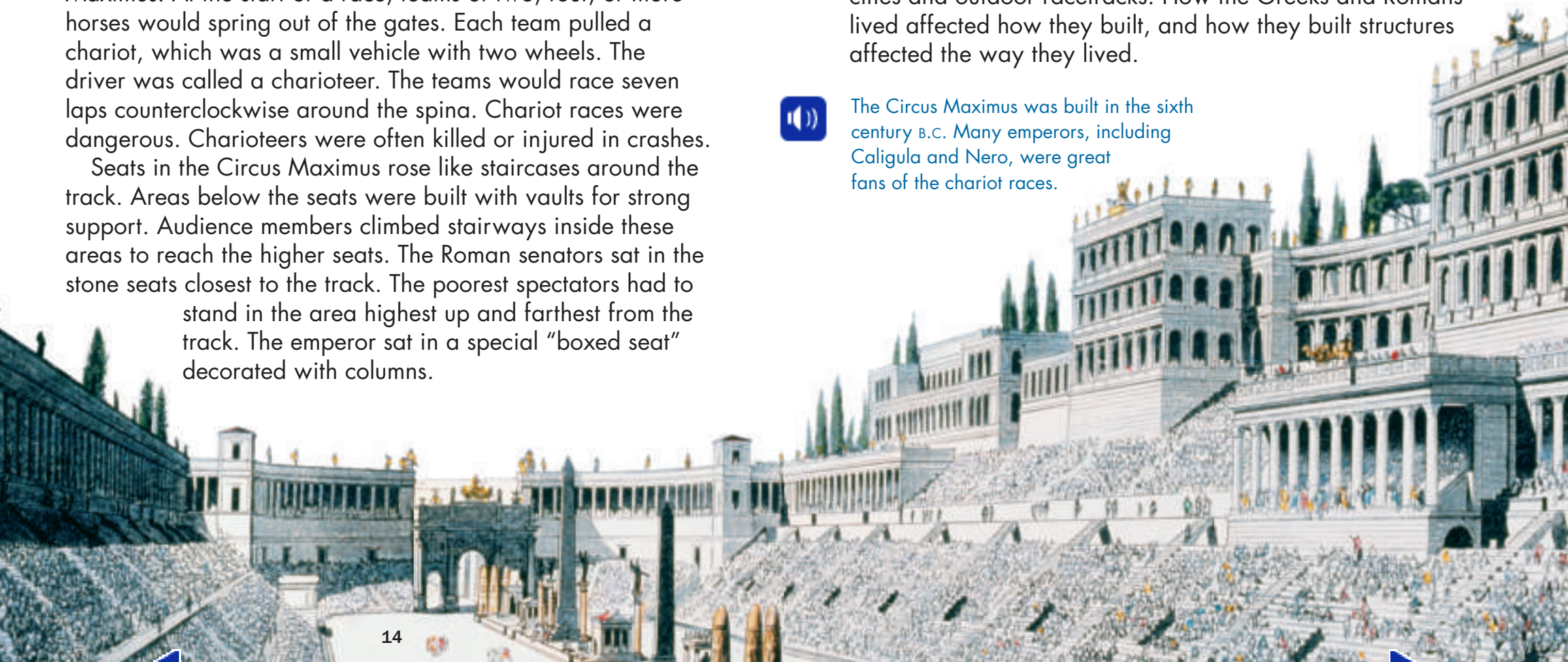
## Skill and Imagination

In designing and building structures, the ancient Greeks and Romans displayed great skill. Both built temples to their gods and goddesses. Their houses were built to meet people’s needs.

The Greeks’ achievements in architecture can be seen in the Parthenon and houses. While the Romans copied much of their architecture from the Greeks, they developed innovations of their own. One of these was concrete, which allowed the Romans to create domed structures. Romans lived in two kinds of houses. They also built aqueducts to bring water to their cities and outdoor racetracks. How the Greeks and Romans lived affected how they built, and how they built structures affected the way they lived.



The Circus Maximus was built in the sixth century B.C. Many emperors, including Caligula and Nero, were great fans of the chariot races.



## Glossary

**agora** the outdoor marketplace and center of government in Athens

**architecture** the art and science of designing and erecting buildings

**democracy** a government by the people

**emperor** the ruler of an empire

**gladiator** a professional Roman fighter

**innovation** something newly introduced

### Write to It!

The ancient Greeks and Romans built many beautiful and useful structures. Which of the structures described in this book is the most interesting to you? Why? Write two or three paragraphs explaining your response.

**Write your ideas on a separate sheet of paper.**

### Photographs

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