

# The Emperor and the Élite



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# Size of the Roman Senate

- Romulus 100 Senators
- Mid Republic 300
- Sulla (81 BC) 600
- Age of Caesar 1,000
- Augustus 600

# The Roman Census Classes

Equestrian order	400,000 sesterces
1st Class	100,000
2nd Class	75,000
3rd Class	50,000
4th Class	25,000
5th Class	11,000
Capite censi	0

# The Census Classes under Augustus

Senate	1,000,000 sesterces
Equestrian order	400,000
1st Class	100,000
2nd Class	75,000
3rd Class	50,000
4th Class	25,000
5th Class	11,000
Capite censi	0

# The *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* (Julian law on marrying categories)

The *lex Julia* (18 BC) provides as follows: ‘A senator, his son, or his grandson or great-grandson through the male line shall not knowingly or with fraudulent intent become betrothed to or marry a freedwoman, or a woman who is or has been, or whose father or mother has been, an actress.

‘Nor shall a senator’s daughter or his granddaughter or great-granddaughter through the male line knowingly or fraudulently become betrothed to or marry a freedman, or any man who is or has been, or whose father or mother has been, an actor.’

*Digest* 23.2.44 (trans. Cooley)

# Suetonius, *Augustus* 44

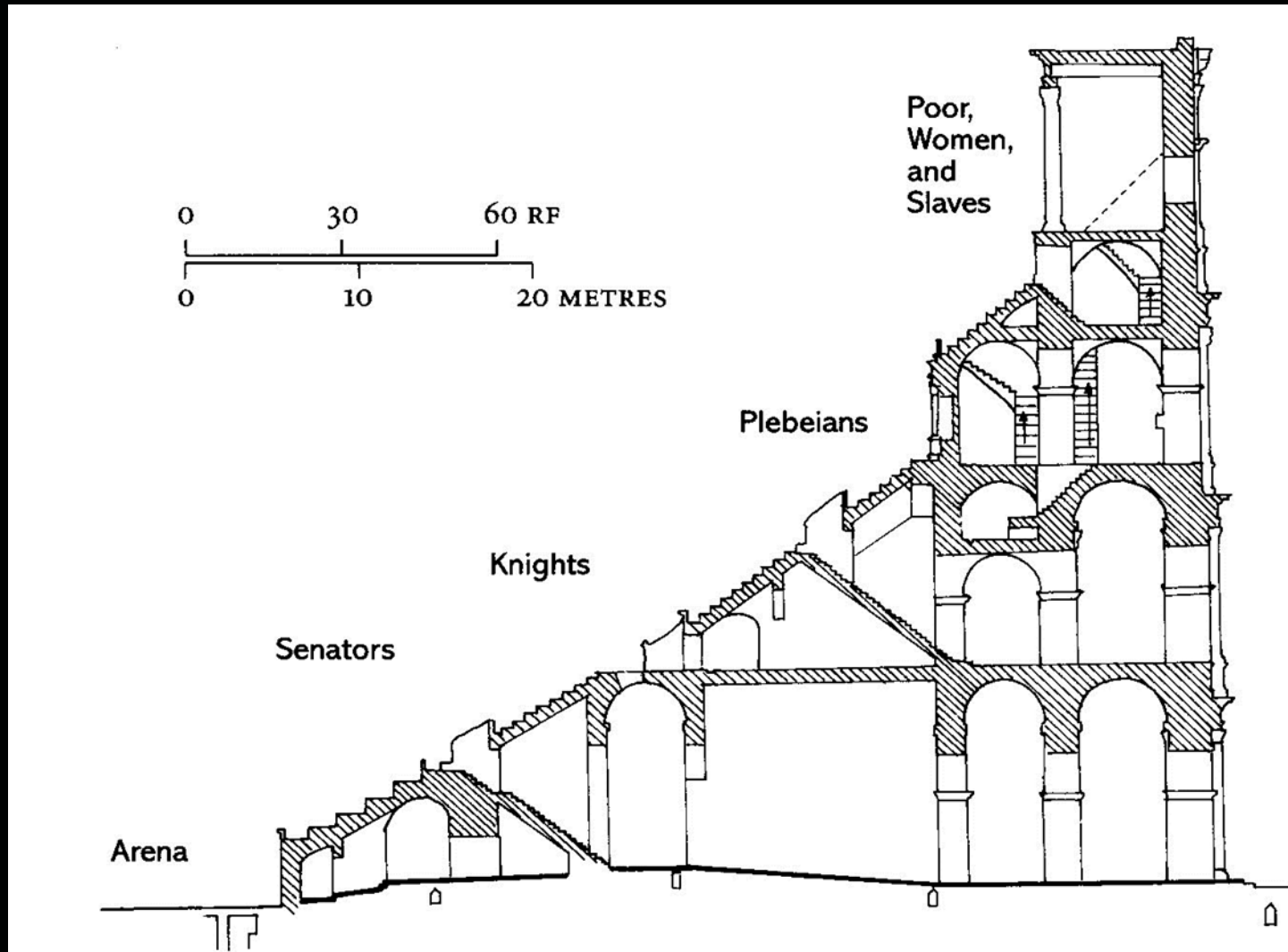
He put a stop by special regulations to disorderly and indiscriminate fashion of viewing the games, through exasperation at the insult to a senator, to whom no one offered a seat in a crowded house at some largely attended games in Puteoli. In consequence of this the senate decreed that, whenever any public show was given anywhere, the first row of seats should be reserved for senators...

# Suetonius, *Augustus* 44

...and at Rome he would not allow the envoys of the free and allied nations to sit in the orchestra, since he was informed that even freedmen were sometimes appointed. He separated the soldiery from the people. He assigned special seats to the married men of the commons, to boys under age their own section and the adjoining one to their preceptors; and he decreed that no one wearing a dark cloak should sit in the middle of the house.

He would not allow women to view even the gladiators except from the upper seats, though it had been the custom for men and women to sit together at such shows. Only the Vestal Virgins were assigned a separate place to themselves, opposite the praetor's tribunal.

# Segregated seating in the Colosseum



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# Roles for individual Senators

- In the provinces:
  - Proconsuls / Proprætors
  - Legati Augusti
- At Rome:
  - Annual magistrates
  - Prefect of the City
  - Consilium principis

# Roles for Imperial Senate

- Election of Magistrates
- Creation of law – senatus consultum(-a)
- Formal conferral of power on new Emperor



**Maiestas minuta populi Romani**

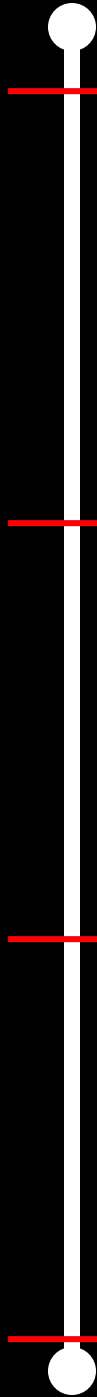
**'the diminution of the majesty of the Roman people'**

# Suet., *Domitian* 21

‘...Held that the condition of the rulers of the most miserable that he was too, the discovery of the conspiracy would not be believed unless it killed the men of whom I was.’

# Senators get the last laugh?

- Damnatio memoriae
- Senatorial history



509 BC - Foundation of the Republic

EARLY REPUBLIC

264 BC – Start of First Punic War

MIDDLE REPUBLIC

133 BC – Tribune of Tiberius Gracchus

LATE REPUBLIC

27 BC - Augustus

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