

FASHION AND BEAUTY

Looking good was very important to the Romans, and wealthy men and women spent a lot of time on their appearance. Fashions were often influenced by what the emperor and his wife wore, and people tried hard to keep up with the latest trends.

TUNICS AND TOGAS

The main garment for men was a tunic, made out of two rectangles of wool stitched together and tied with a belt. Underneath, men wore a loincloth - an ancient version of underpants made from a strip of wool or linen.

Most men wore short, undyed tunics like this.



Men often wore a cloak over their tunic.



Men and women wore open sandals made of leather.

Over their tunic, Roman citizens sometimes wore a toga - a large piece of woollen cloth wrapped carefully around the body. But the toga was so uncomfortable that it was usually only worn on important public occasions.

A statue of the Emperor Augustus wearing a toga



STOLAS AND PALLAS

Underwear for women consisted of a loincloth and sometimes a simple leather bra. On top of these went a long robe called a stola and a large rectangular shawl, known as a palla.

A woman in a bright silk stola



Women often wore their palla draped around their shoulders.



The palla could also be looped over the head like a hood.

During the Empire, fashionable Roman ladies began to wear brightly dyed stolas and pallas, made from Indian cotton or Chinese silk. These materials were incredibly expensive, and silk was literally worth its weight in gold.

STATUS SYMBOLS

Clothes were an important way of showing a person's status, and there were strict rules about what different people were allowed to wear.

Only Roman citizens could dress in a toga - foreigners and slaves were forbidden to wear one. Purple was the most expensive dye, and only the wealthiest people could afford it. Senators wore a toga with a broad purple stripe, but it was a crime for anyone except the emperor to dress entirely in purple.