

INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can watch movies and see examples of Roman sculpture and art, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com



SCENES IN STONE

Like the Greeks before them, the Romans carved dramatic scenes in stone and marble, but Roman sculptors concentrated on events from the glorious history of Rome. Roman carvings usually look crowded and action-packed, with lively figures set against dark, dramatic shadows.



A carved scene from Trajan's Column showing Roman soldiers in battle

By the time of the Emperor Constantine, Roman sculptors had lost much of their earlier inspiration. Although some fine work was still produced, many later Roman carvings show flattened, stumpy figures arranged in rigid ranks.



Fruit from a fresco in a Roman town house

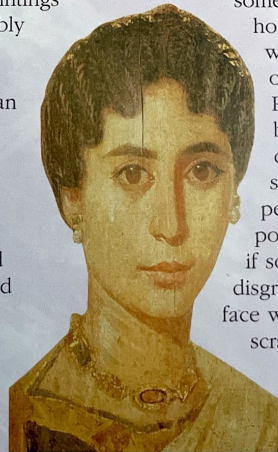
PAINTED WALLS

Roman temples, palaces and villas were all decorated with frescoes - a kind of mural that is painted directly onto the wall while the plaster is still wet. Frescoes are very long-lasting and many Roman paintings have stayed remarkably bright and clear.

The subjects of Roman frescoes ranged from imposing arches and columns to exotic landscapes, gardens and country scenes. In temples and grand houses, artists showed gods and goddesses, while the walls of middle-class homes were often painted with scenes from daily life.

PAINTED PORTRAITS

Many Romans paid for their portraits to be painted on wooden panels or on the walls of their houses, and some Roman homes had whole galleries of ancestors. Portraits were believed to contain the spirit of the person they portrayed, and if someone was disgraced, their face would be scratched out.



This Roman portrait was found attached to a coffin in Egypt.