

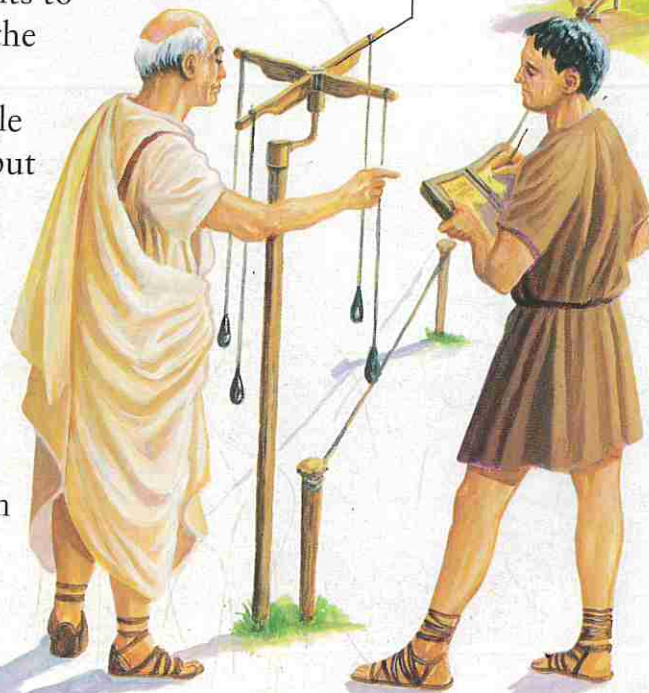
ROADS AND TRAVEL

The Roman empire had an excellent system of roads. Most roads were built by the army. This is because the roads were built mainly to allow soldiers to travel quickly in wartime. However, they also benefited trade. The roads made it easier for merchants to carry their goods around the empire.

Sometimes well-off people went on sightseeing trips but most people did not travel unless they had to. They lived in the same town or village all their lives and rarely left it. Some Roman roads are still used today. They are easy to spot on a map because they often run for long distances in very straight lines.

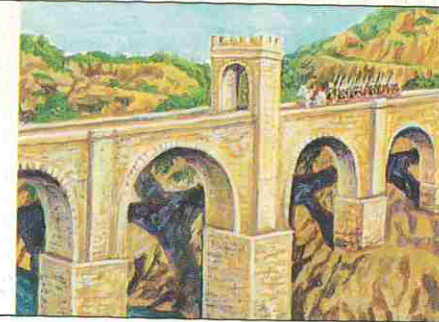
SURVEYING

The route was surveyed using a groma. This was difficult to use. It had to be kept perfectly level and even a breeze could cause problems. The route was marked out with stakes.



BRIDGE BUILDING

The Romans built strong arched bridges using stone and concrete. This bridge in Spain is still in use today, more than 1,800 years later. It is over 45m high.



PAVING SLABS

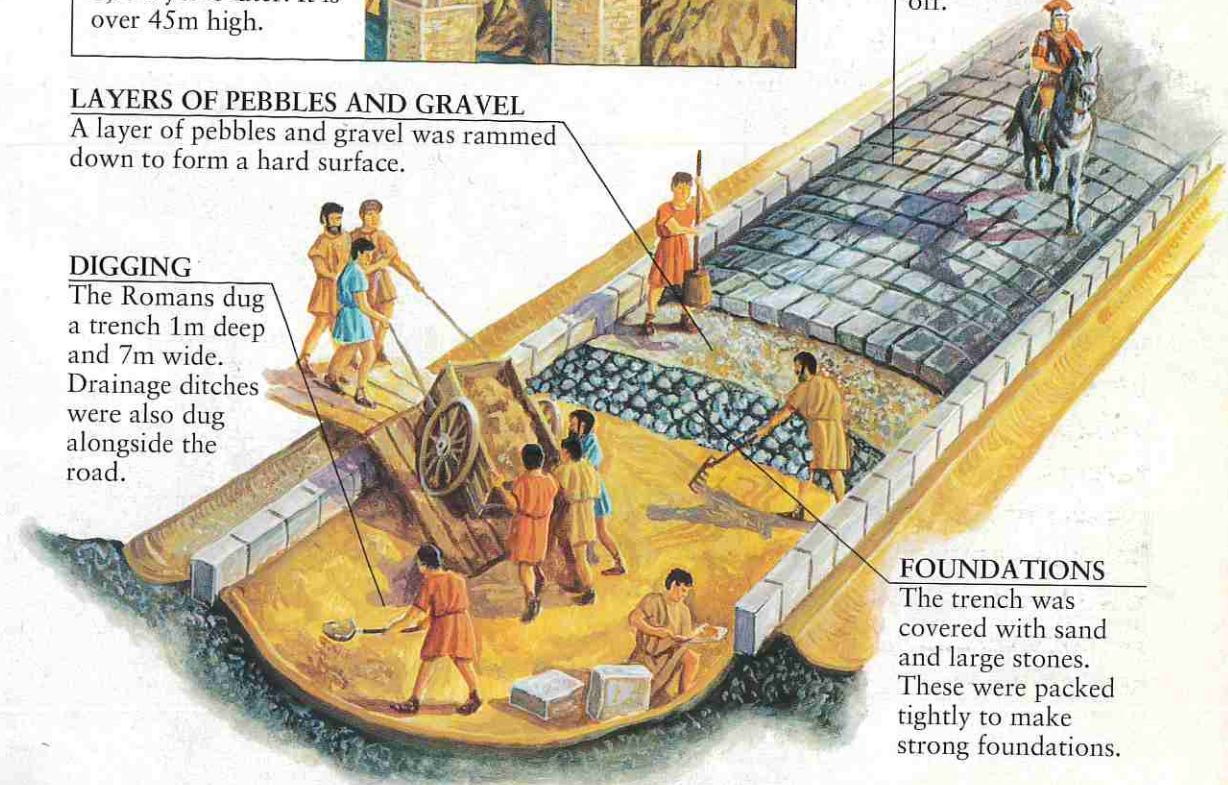
The road was paved with hard-wearing stone slabs. The middle of the road was made higher than the sides so rain would drain off.

LAYERS OF PEBBLES AND GRAVEL

A layer of pebbles and gravel was rammed down to form a hard surface.

DIGGING

The Romans dug a trench 1m deep and 7m wide. Drainage ditches were also dug alongside the road.



FOUNDATIONS

The trench was covered with sand and large stones. These were packed tightly to make strong foundations.

LOOK OUT FOR THESE

MILESTONES

A Roman mile was about 1,460m long. Each mile along a road was marked off by a stone. They were like modern road signs. They told the traveller how far he had to go to reach the next town.



ROAD MAP

This is a small part of a Roman road map. The map shows the roads and the distances between the towns and cities of the empire. Mountains, rivers and seas are also shown. Maps helped travellers plan their journeys and work out how long they would take.



SLIP-ON SHOE

Horses wore iron shoes to protect their hoofs when travelling on roads. The shoes were held on with rope.



STAGE COACH

The Roman empire had an official postal service. Stage coaches carried mail and government officials all over the empire. Travel was slow. Coaches travelled only 35-50km a day and they were bumpy and uncomfortable to ride in.