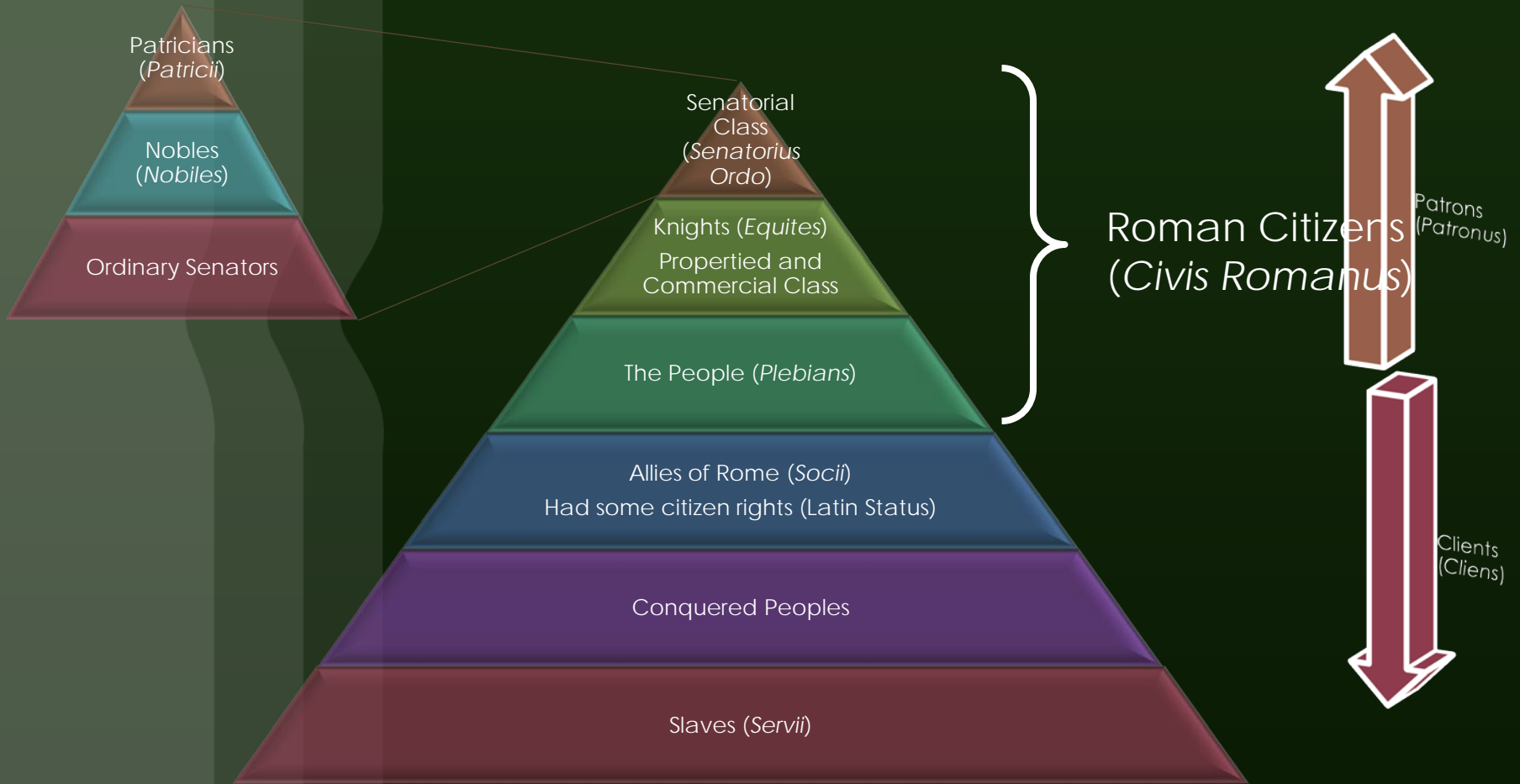




Res Publica

Structures and Systems

Roman Society



Senatus Populesque Romanus

Senate:

- ▲ 600 magistrates and ex-magistrates who served for life unless expelled.
- ▲ Officially an advisory body
- ▲ In effect the chief governmental body it controlled:
 - public finances
 - foreign affairs
 - assigned military commands and provinces
 - debated and passed decrees that would be submitted to the assemblies for final ratification

Senatus Populesque Romanus

Assemblies:

- Made up of all male full Roman citizens
- No debate from the floor was possible.
- Votes were counted in groups, not individually (the vote of each group was determined by the vote of the majority of individuals in that group).
- ▲ **Assembly of the Curiae** (*comitia curiata*):
 - oldest assembly; by the late Republic had mostly ceremonial and clan functions.
- ▲ **Assembly of the Centuries** (*comitia centuriata*):
 - elected consuls, praetors, censors;
 - declared war;
 - served as court of appeal for citizens sentenced to death.
 - 193 centuries, determined by wealth
- ▲ **Assembly of the Tribes** (*comitia tributa*):
 - elected all other magistrates;
 - voted yes or no on laws;
 - 35 tribes were originally determined geographically and then passed on by birth.
- ▲ **Concilium Plebis**
 - Plebeian assembly elected the magistrates open only to plebeians (tribunes and plebeian aediles).

Senatus Populesque Romanus

▲ 2 consuls

- ❑ convened and presided over the Senate and assemblies.
- ❑ initiated and administered legislation.
- ❑ served as generals in military campaigns.
- ❑ represented Rome in foreign affairs.
- ❑ **Dictator** served up to 6 months in times of emergency when the constitution was suspended.
- ❑ **Proconsul** governed a province.

▲ 8 praetors

- ❑ judges in law courts.
- ❑ they assumed administrative duties of consuls when these were absent from Rome.

▲ 2 censors

- ❑ elected every 5 years for terms of 1½ years. revised lists of senators and equestrians.
- ❑ conducted census of citizens and property assessments for tax purposes.

Senatus Populesque Romanus

▲ 4 aediles

- supervised public places, public games, and the grain supply in the city of Rome.
- 2 were required to be plebeians, and the other two (who had more status) could come from either order.

▲ 10 tribunes

- had to be plebeian, because the office was established to protect the plebeians from arbitrary actions of magistrates.
- Hence the primary power of tribunes was negative; they could veto the act of any magistrate and stop any official act of administration.
- They were by law **sacrosanct**, meaning that anyone who attacked them physically could be immediately and summarily killed.

▲ 20 quaestors

- administered finances of state treasury and served in various capacities in the provinces
- when elected quaestor, a man automatically became eligible for membership in the Senate, though censors had to appoint him to fill a vacancy

Under the Empire

Princeps (First Citizen)

- ▲ His power (*imperium*) covered:
 - Tribunician powers
 - Proconsular powers
 - Pontifex Maximus
- ▲ The Senate and Assemblies still met but these were really a cloak for the Emperor's autocratic power.