

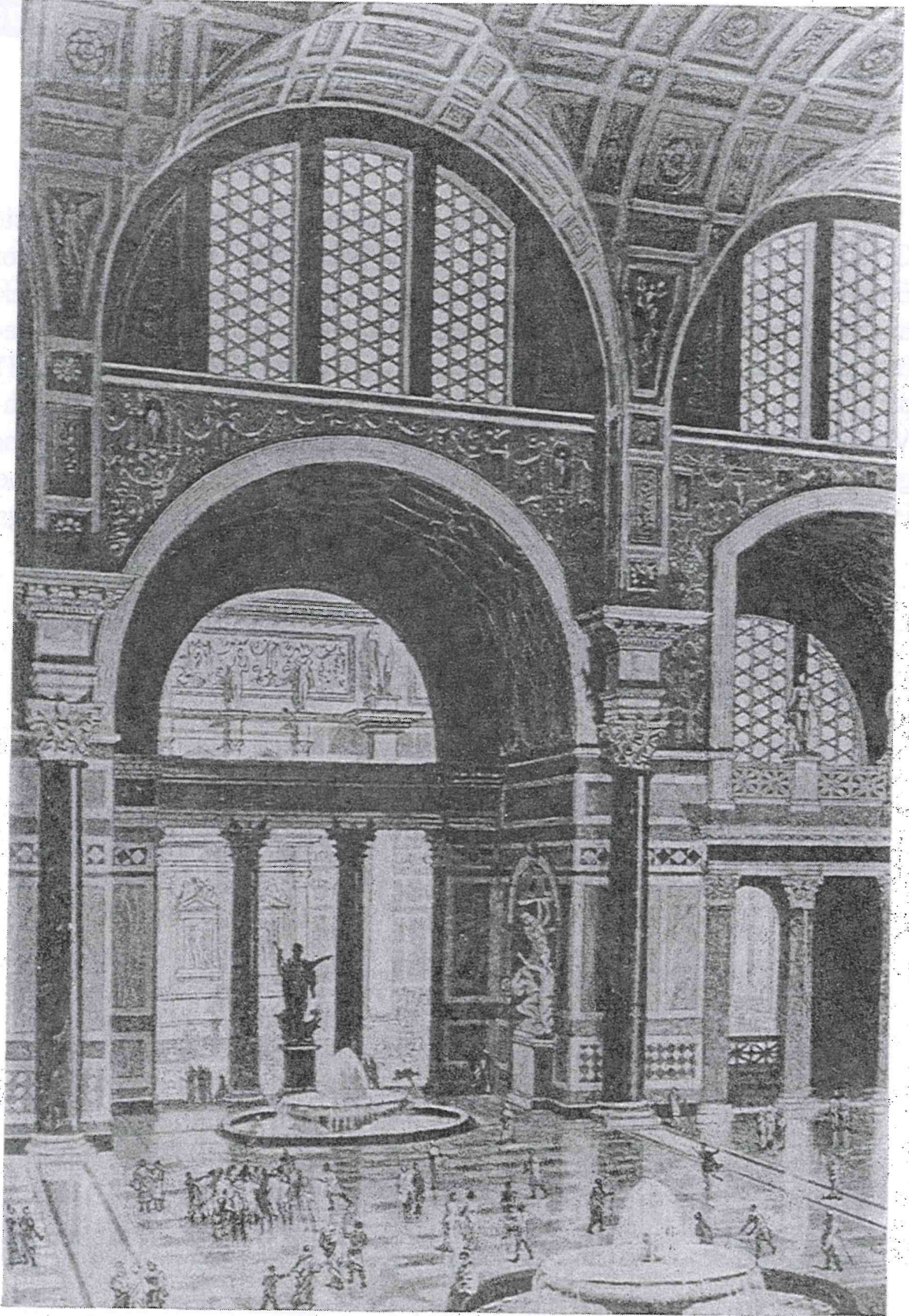
System of Laws

Early Roman law was written down and carved on twelve tablets. Though these Twelves Tables of Law applied only to Roman citizens, the tablets, as the picture shows, were hung in the Roman Forum for all to see. As the Empire expanded, these laws were combined with other laws and customs. The laws were written down as a code of justice that would apply to all people. According to Roman law, an accused person was considered innocent until he or she was proven guilty. The principles of Roman law became the basis for many codes of law developed in European countries and the places—like America—that were influenced by them.



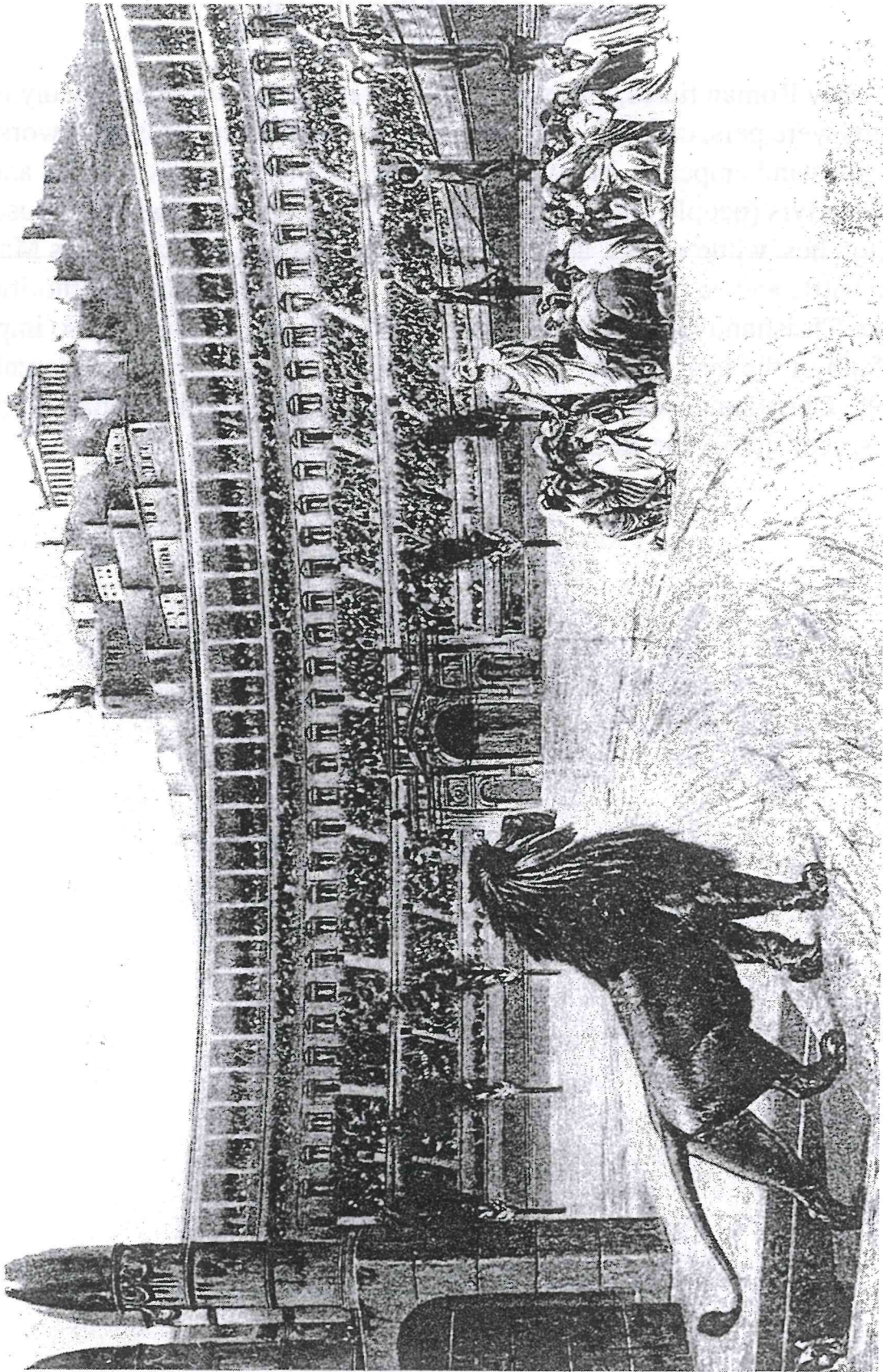
Latin Language

Latin was the spoken and written language of Rome. Many forms of literature—poetry, histories, fictional stories, and dramas—were written in Latin. Here we see a picture of an educated Roman reading in his private library. Latin could be understood throughout the Empire, and it became the language of the Roman Catholic church. Latin greatly influenced the vocabulary of many languages. The English word “justice,” for instance, comes from the Latin word “jus”, meaning law. This same Latin root is also found in the French word “justice,” the Italian word “giustizia,” and the Spanish word, “justicia.”



Spread of Greek Ideas

Roman life was heavily influenced by Greek ideas and culture. Ancient Greece was an important civilization that existed before the rise of the Roman Empire. Educated Romans learned the Greek language and studied Greek art, literature, philosophy, and architecture. Romans developed Greek architectural features, such as columns and arches, and used them in their buildings. This picture of the Baths of Caracalla shows the use of the arch in Roman bath-houses. Visitors came to Rome to see the city's magnificent buildings, 37 monumental gates, 500 fountains, and 36 marble arches. Many visitors returned to their own lands and began to imitate Roman and Greek styles in their own buildings.



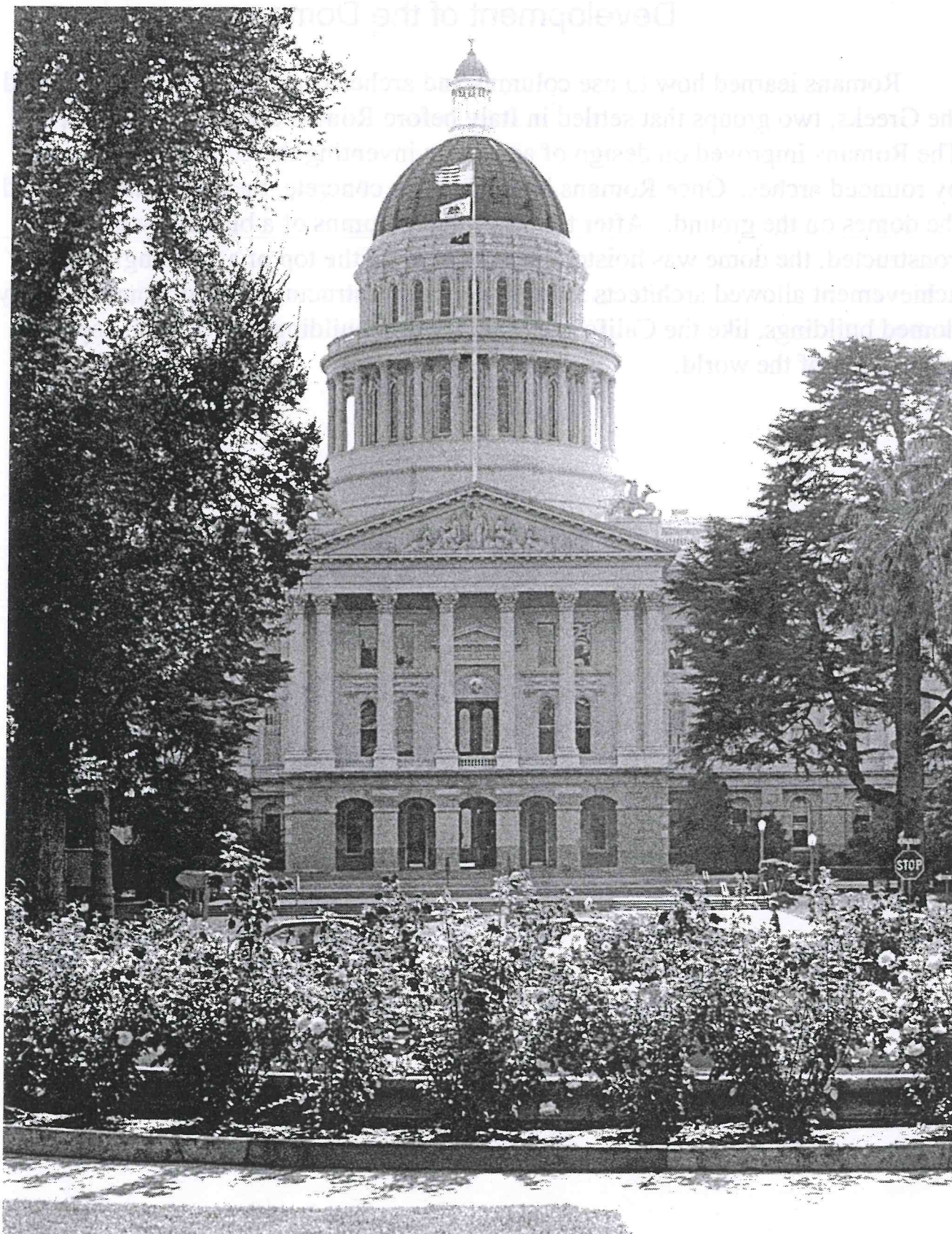
Spread of Christianity

In early Roman times, Christianity, a new religion, was one of many religions. Christians were persecuted (legally punished) because they refused to worship the Roman gods and emperor. Many Christians were tortured and executed and became martyrs (people who suffer or die for their beliefs). Some were used as human torches, while others, as pictured above, were sent to the Circus Maximus arena to battle and be devoured by lions. The attempts by Roman authorities to eliminate Christianity backfired. People in the Roman Empire were so impressed by the faith of the martyrs that they converted to Christianity in large numbers. By A.D. 395, Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire and rapidly spread across the Roman world.



Greater Freedom for Women

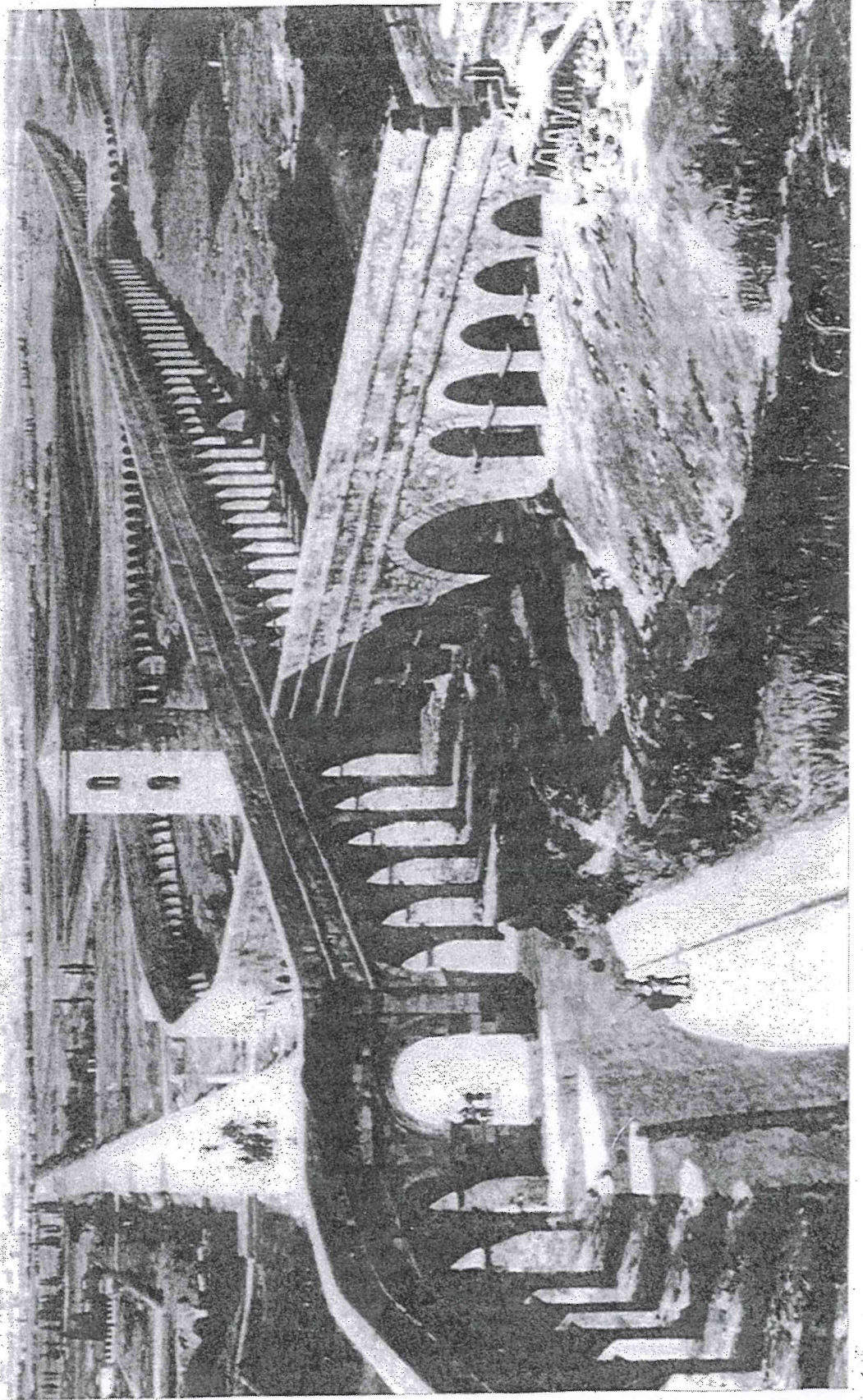
In early Roman times, women had few legal rights. As the Roman Empire expanded, new ideas were included in the law that provided some protection for women. Women were given the right to own property, which helped them gain other rights. For example, some Roman women owned businesses and some gained political influence in Rome. Above, we see a picture of a woman pharmacist. At home, many women shared in household decisions and managed the family accounts.



Development of the Dome

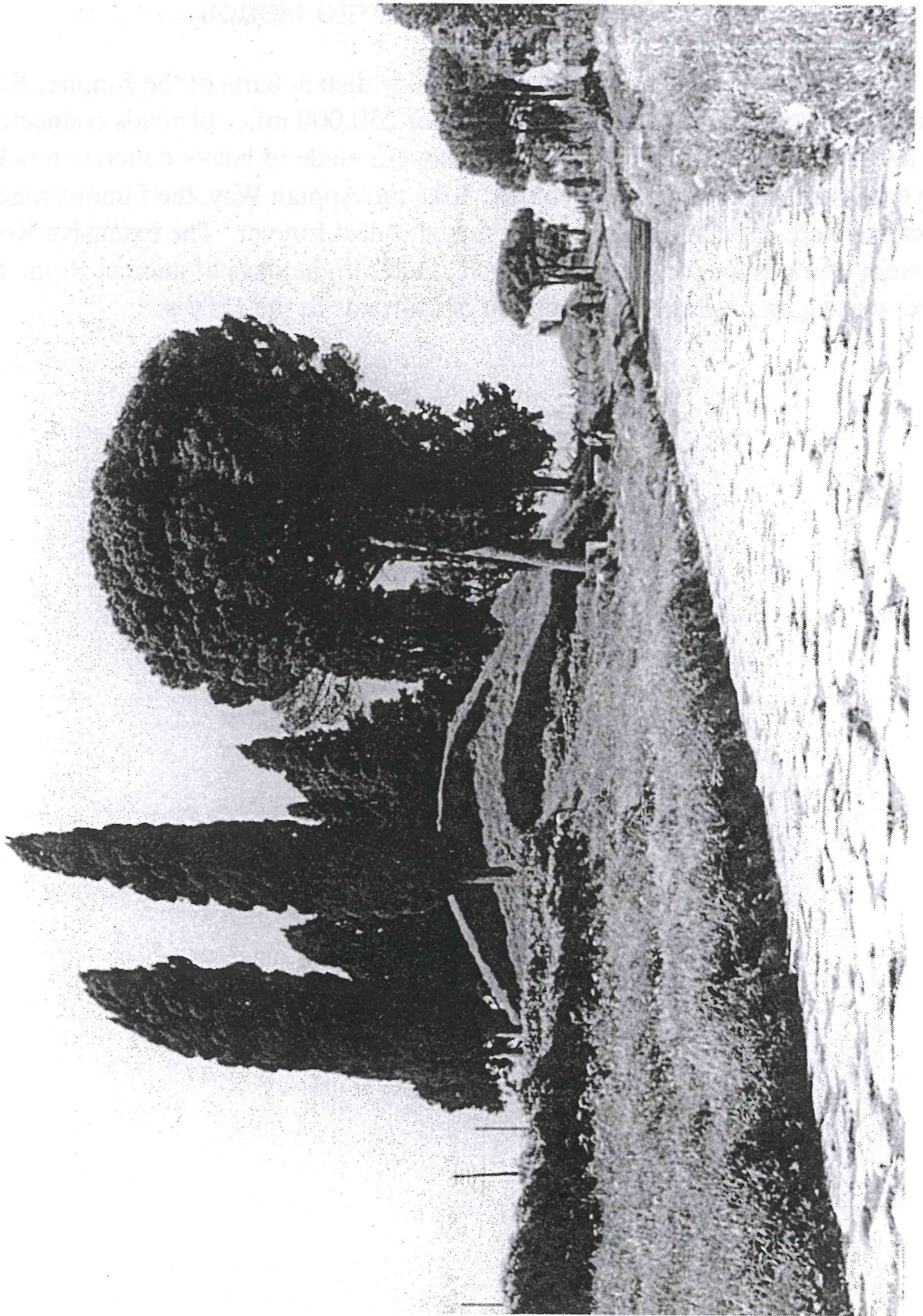
Romans learned how to use columns and arches from both the Etruscans and the Greeks, two groups that settled in Italy before Roman civilization developed. The Romans improved on design of arches by inventing the dome, a roof formed by rounded arches. Once Romans learned to use concrete, they were able to mold the domes on the ground. After the walls and columns of a building were constructed, the dome was hoisted into position on the top of a building. This achievement allowed architects to build enormous structures using domes. Today domed buildings, like the California State Capitol building shown here, appear in many parts of the world.





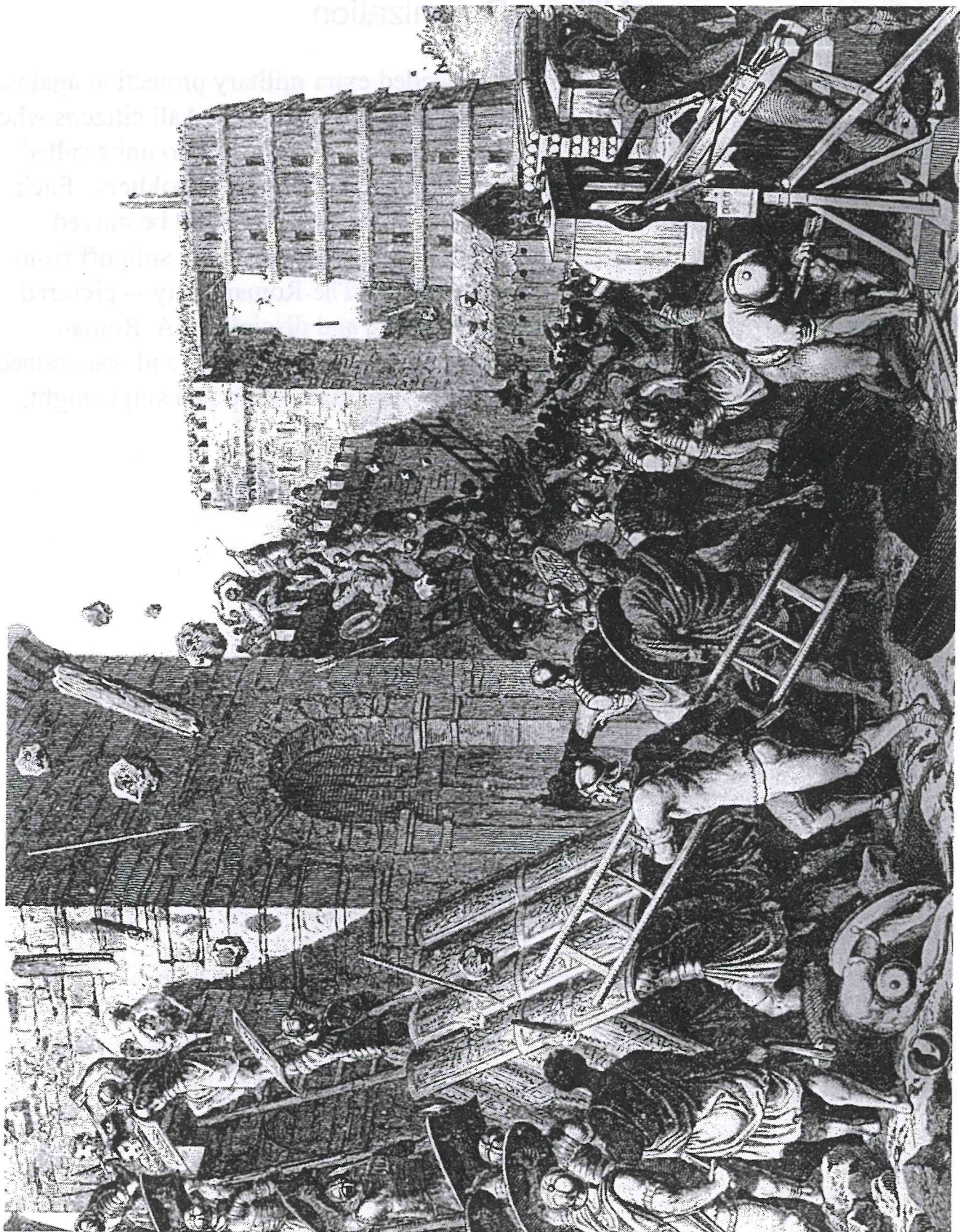
Development of Aqueducts

The need for a water supply in cities led Romans to build aqueducts. Aqueducts, canal-like concrete structures, brought water from springs, wells, and distant lakes to people in cities. In order to supply drinking water to the Roman people, aqueducts tunneled through mountains and crossed valleys. Here we see an illustration of interconnected systems of aqueducts in ancient Rome.



Network of Concrete Roads

To improve transportation and help unify distant parts of the Empire, Romans built highways. By the year A.D. 100, over 250,000 miles of roads connected the cities of the Roman empire. These roads were made of heavy concrete blocks set in layers of crushed stones and pebbles. Like the Appian Way, the famous road pictured here, Roman roads were designed to last forever. The extensive Roman system of roads and bridges made travel faster in the days of ancient Rome than it ever was again until the development of railroads in the 1800's.



Military Organization

As the Roman Empire expanded, it needed extra military protection against invaders. To strengthen defenses, the Roman government required all citizens who owned land to serve in the army. The Roman army was divided into units called legions. These groups were made up of 6,000 heavily armed foot soldiers. Each legion was divided into smaller units, called centuries, which could be moved around quickly. As a result, groups of Roman soldiers could easily split off from the main army and attack an enemy from all sides. The Roman army— pictured here storming a fortress—was built on cooperation and discipline. A Roman legion had to be able to build a complete fortified camp in a night, and was trained to—at the sound of a trumpet— take apart the very same camp in a single night.



Republican Form of Government

Rome's form of government influenced other societies. In 509 B.C., Rome set up a republic—a government in which citizens vote to choose their leaders. By about 275 B.C., no single class of people dominated the government. Rather, the government was partly a monarchy (ruled by a king), partly an aristocracy (ruled by nobles, as was the Roman senate), and partly a democracy (government by the people). In the picture above, we see a Roman leader speaking in the Senate. The Constitution of the United States is based on the Roman Republic's system of balancing the legislative, judicial, and executive powers of government.