



Good day Worthy Knights,  
In this part 75, College and Senate

Wikipedia

A collegium (plural collegia), or **College**, was any association in ancient Rome with a legal personality. Such associations could be civil or religious. The word collegium literally means "society", from collega ('colleague').

### **Etymology**

The word "college" is from the Latin verb *lego*, *legere*, *legi*, *lectum*, "to collect, gather together, pick", plus the preposition *cum*, "with", thus meaning "selected together". Thus "colleagues" are literally "persons who have been selected to work together".

In ancient Rome a collegium was a "body, guild, corporation united in colleagueship; of magistrates, praetors, tribunes, priests, augurs; a political club or trade guild". Thus a college was a form of corporation or corporate body, an artificial legal person (body/corpus) with its own legal personality, with the capacity to enter into legal contracts, to sue and be sued.

In mediaeval England there were colleges of priests, for example in chantry chapels; modern survivals include the Royal College of Surgeons in England (originally the Guild of Surgeons Within the City of London), the College of Arms in London (a body of heralds enforcing heraldic law), an electoral college (to elect representatives), etc., all groups of persons "selected in common" to perform a specified function and appointed by a monarch, founder or other person in authority. As for the modern "college of education", it was a body created for that purpose, for example Eton College was founded in 1440 by letters patent of King Henry VI for the constitution of a college of Fellows, priests, clerks, choristers, poor scholars, and old poor men, with one master or governor, whose duty it shall be to instruct these scholars and any others who may resort thither from any part of England in the knowledge of letters, and especially of grammar, without payment".

### **Religious collegia**

There were four great religious colleges (*quattuor amplissima collegia*) of Roman priests, in descending order of importance:

#### Pontifices

Headed by the pontifex maximus The College of Pontiffs (Latin: *Collegium Pontificum*; was a body of the ancient Roman state whose members were the highest-ranking priests of the state religion.

#### Augures

An augur was a priest and his main role was the practice of augury: Interpreting the will of the gods by studying the flight of birds

#### Quindecimviri sacris faciundis,

They were the fifteen (quindecim) members of a college (collegium) with priestly duties. Most notably they guarded the Sibylline Books, scriptures which they consulted and interpreted at the request of the Senate.

#### Septemviri epulonum

The seven Epulones ("feasters") arranged feasts and public banquets at festivals and games (*ludi*). They constituted the last of the four great religious corporations (*quattuor amplissima collegia*) of ancient Roman priests.

The modern word **Senate** is derived from the Latin word *senātus*, which comes from *senex*, 'old man'. The members or legislators of a senate are called senators. Its meaning is derived from a very ancient form of social organization, in which advisory or decision-making powers are reserved for the eldest men.

## Overview

For the same reason, the word senate is correctly used when referring to any powerful authority characteristically composed by the eldest members of a community, as a deliberative body of a faculty in an institution of higher learning is often called a senate. This form adaptation was used to show the power of those in body and for the decision-making process to be thorough, which could take a long period of time.

The original senate was the Roman Senate, which lasted until at least AD 603, although various efforts to revive it were made in Medieval Rome. In the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Senate continued until the Fourth Crusade, circa 1202–1204.

The Roman Senate was a governing and advisory assembly in ancient Rome. It was one of the most enduring institutions in Roman history, being established in the first days of the city of Rome (traditionally founded in 753 BC). It survived the overthrow of the Roman monarchy in 509 BC; the fall of the Roman Republic in the 1st century BC; the division of the Roman Empire in AD 395; and the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476; and Justinian's attempted reconquest in the 6th century.

During the days of the Roman Kingdom, most of the time the Senate was little more than an advisory council to the king, but it also elected new Roman kings. The last king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, was overthrown following a coup d'état led by Lucius, who founded the Roman Republic.

During the early Republic, the Senate was politically weak, while the various executive magistrates were quite powerful. Since the transition from monarchy to constitutional rule was most likely gradual, it took several generations before the Senate was able to assert itself over the executive magistrates.

By the middle Republic, the Senate had reached the apex of its republican power. The late Republic saw a decline in the Senate's power, which began following the reforms of the tribunes Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.

After the transition of the Republic into the Principate, the Senate lost much of its political power as well as its prestige. Following the constitutional reforms of Emperor Diocletian, the Senate became politically irrelevant.

When the seat of government was transferred out of Rome, the Senate was reduced to a purely municipal body. That decline in status was reinforced when the emperor Constantine the Great created an additional senate in Constantinople.

