Roman Theatre
Founding of Rome

- Brothers: Romulus and Remus
- Father: Mars, God of War
- Mother: Human Woman
- Sent Down Tiber River
- Raised by Wolves
- Brother against Brother, Romulus wins
Fescienne Verses: early Roman poetry that developed into improvised performances
**Attelan Farces**: early Roman performances, consisting of vulgar subjects, rude jokes, and ‘low Comedy’
Roman Tragedy
Main Characteristics

• Based on Nobility/Upper Class
• Violence on Stage
• Determined by Fate
• Supernatural Elements
Seneca (Lucius Annaeus Seneca)

Roman tragic playwright,

wrote ‘closet dramas’
**Slapstick:**

Over the top physical comedy, very violent
Stock Characters: character types that do not change over time.
Roman Comedy
Basic Characteristics

• Slapstick Comedy

• Stock Characters

• Everyday People, Common Plotlines

• No Chorus
Terence (Publius Terentius Afer) comic playwright, born a slave
Plautus  (*Titus Maccius Plautus*)
comic playwright whose work influenced many later playwrights
Roscius (*Quintus Roscius Gallus*)

Most famous actor in Roman Times, first to become wealthy as an actor
Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus)

Poet and drama critic, wrote ‘rules’ for plays in ‘The Art of Poetry’
The Art of Poetry (Rules):
• Comedy and tragedy should be distinct forms
• Tragedy should use nobility as characters
• Comedy should use common people as characters
• Drama should entertain AND teach a moral lesson
Greek Theatres vs Roman Theatres

- Built into hillsides
- Democratic seating
- Orchestra as dancing place

Freestanding
- Seating by Class
- Orchestra as seating
Circus Maximus
Chariot Race
Track in Rome
The Colosseum:

The largest amphitheater built in the Roman Empire
Naumachia
Mock sea battles held in flooded amphitheaters
Stage Directions:
Up Center, Down Center, Stage Right,
Stage Left, Center Stage
Always from the perspective of the Actor