This chapter provides a historical sketch of Rome. It has been written to provide a contextual basis for the study of Roman private law. The history of Rome is traditionally divided into three main periods based on the dominant constitutional structure in Roman society during these three periods. These are the Monarchy (eighth century bc–510 bc), Republic (509–27 bc), and Empire (27 bc–ad 565). Scholars of Roman law tend to refine this division even further. Thus, to the scholar of Roman law, the period from the founding of Rome in the eighth century bc–c. 250 bc is regarded as the ‘archaic’ period of Roman law. The period thereafter, from c. 250 bc–27 bc, is generally described as the ‘pre-classical period’ of Roman law. For scholars of Roman law, the ‘classical’ period, c. first three centuries AD, and the Justinianic period, c. sixth century AD, are the most important, owing to the compilation of ‘classical’ Roman law by order the Byzantine Emperor, Justinian, in the sixth century.