**Famous writers of Ancient Rome and their connection to art:**

**Virgil’s Aeneid: Written c. 29 BCE, Virgil died in 19 BCE**

 Virgil wrote it during the reign of Rome’s first emperor, Augustus

 A Latin epic that celebrates Aeneas as the legendary founder of Rome

 Composed of twelve books beginning with Troy

 Aeneas travels the world and the underworld

 Pius Aeneas refers to his sense of duty and destiny.

 There are implications of Augustus as the ruler of a great empire under divine guidance, the second founder of Rome

 The message to the readers of the Republic of Rome was that their city and Roman domination of the world had been the will of the gods.

 It suggests that Roman destiny was political not artistic, “Roman, remember by your strength to rule/ /Earth’s people—for your arts are to be these:/To pacify, to impose the rule of law/To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.

 Roman reliefs tended to usually depicted historical narratives, commemorating the actions of a particular individual rather than mythical events.

 Most of the reliefs adorned architecture, Rome’s most innovative art.

**Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* and other writings: Written in 1 CE, he died in 18 CE**

 Wrote Amores which describes love in different moods

 Heroides, which is love letters from legendary heroines to their husbands or lovers

 His poetry is irreverent and witty

 Metamorphoses, a hexameter poem in fifteen books (six metrical feet all in the same or a related meter.

 Metamorphoses’ theme is the miraculous transformations of gods and a collection of Greek and Roman myths that inspired numerous works of art.

 Ars Amatoria, was a treatise on the arts of seduction and may have gotten Ovid exiled by Augustus to an island on the Black sea where he died ten years later.

 Christians applied Ovid’s writings to Christian themes of morality, and works of art through to the Renaissance used his iconography.

**Pliny the Elder (c.23-79 CE): Gauis Plinius Secundus**

 Roman Public servant

 Held Military and Civil positions in North Africa, Gaul, and Spain

 Wrote history of ancient arts, grammar, military history and oratory

 Historia Natualis, is the only surviving document, a 37 books

 It contains topics of the elements of the universe, continental geography and ethnology (The science that analyzes and compares human cultures, as in social structure, language, religion, and technology) of Europe, Africa, and Asia

 It also contains physiology, zoology, botany and medicinal properties of plants

 Metallurgy the use of mineral for medical purposes and for the arts are also discussed

 His history of ancient art remains a fundamental source for art historians

 He saw the ash spew from Vesuvius and reported each step to his secretary from a boat off shore.

 The next day he went ashore and was asphyxiated by the sulfurous fumes

 His nephew was also a historian and wrote volumes about his uncle

**Josephus on the Jewish Wars (c. 37-100 CE)**

 A Jewish soldier and historian who wrote of the Jewish Wars.

 He was granted Roman citizenship

 His histories include a description of the triumphal procession of Vespasian and his son Titus after the sack of Jerusalem

 He reflects on the Romans love of material splendor and its role in projecting images of imperial power

 He was struck by the abundance of gold and silver objects

 He wrote: “were the spoils seized from the temple of Jerusalem: a gold table weighing many talents, a lamp stand also made of gold, which was made in a form different from that which we usually employ. For there was a central shaft fastened to the base; then spandrels extended from this in an arrangement which rather resembled the shape of a trident, and on the end of each of these spandrels a lamp was forged. There were seven of these emphasizing the honor accorded to the number seven among the Jews.”

**Marcus Aurelius Emperor and Philosopher (r. 161-180 CE)**

 Wrote Meditations, which he wrote in Greek.

 Had a great respect for artists

 He wrote; “…in their devotion to their art they wear themselves to the bone, and immersing themselves in their task go without washing or eating.

 He did agree with Plato that art was a mere imitation (mimesis) and therefore inferior to nature.