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SPQR

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This article is about the Latin initialism. For other uses, see [SPQR \(disambiguation\)](#).



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SPQR or **S.P.Q.R.**, an [initialism](#) for ***Senatus Populusque Romanus*** (Classical Latin: [sɛˈnaːtʊs pɔpʊˈlʊskʷɐ roːˈmaːnʊs]; transl. "The Senate and People of Rome"), is an emblematic phrase referring to the government of the [Roman Republic](#). It appears on documents made public by an inscription in stone or metal, in dedications of monuments and public works, and on some [Roman currency](#).

The full phrase appears in Roman political, legal, and historical literature, such as the speeches of [Cicero](#) and the *[Ab Urbe Condita Libri](#)* (*Books from the Founding of the City*) of [Livy](#).

It probably is the longest lasting acronym in the history of the world.^{[[1](#)]}

Translation [[edit](#)]



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Politics of ancient Rome



Periods

Roman Kingdom

753–509 BC

Roman Republic

509–27 BC

Roman Empire

27 BC – AD 395

Western

AD 395–476

Eastern

AD 330–1453

Timeline

Constitution

[Kingdom](#) · [Republic](#) (Sullan republic) · [Empire](#) (Augustan reforms) · [Late Empire](#)

Political institutions

[Imperium](#)
[Collegiality](#)
[Auctoritas](#)

[Roman citizenship](#)
Cursus honorum



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In **Latin**, *Senātus* is a **nominative** singular noun meaning "**Senate**". *Populusque* is compounded from the nominative noun *Populus*, "the People", and *-que*, an **enclitic particle** meaning "and" which **connects** the two nominative nouns. The last word, *Rōmānus* ("**Roman**"), is an **adjective** modifying the whole of *Senātus Populusque*: the "Roman Senate and People", taken as a whole. Thus, the phrase is translated **literally** as "The Roman Senate and People", or more freely as "The Senate and People of Rome".

Historical context [[edit](#)]



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The title's date of establishment is unknown, but it first appears in inscriptions of the **Late Republic**, from around 80 BC onwards. Previously, the official name of the Roman state, as evidenced on coins, was simply *ROMA*. The abbreviation last appears on coins of **Constantine the Great** (ruled 312–337 AD), the first Roman emperor to support **Christianity**.^{[*[citation needed](#)*]}

This signature continued in use under the **Roman Empire**. The emperors were considered the *de jure* representatives of the people even though the *senātūs consulta*, or decrees of the Senate, were made at the *de facto* pleasure of the emperor.^{[*[citation needed](#)*]}

Populus Romanus in Roman literature is a phrase meaning the government of the People. When the Romans named governments of foreign states, they used *populus* in the singular or plural, such as *populi Priscorum Latinorum*, "the governments of the Old Latins". *Romanus* is the established adjective used to distinguish the Romans, as in *civis Romanus*, "**Roman citizen**".^{[*[citation needed](#)*]}

The Roman people appear very often in law and history in such phrases as *dignitas*, *maiestas*, *auctoritas*, *libertas populi Romani*, the "dignity, majesty, authority, freedom of the Roman people". They were a *populus liber*, "a free people". There was an *exercitus*, *imperium*, *iudicia*, *honores*, *consules*, *voluntas* of this same

Assemblies

Centuriate	Plebeian
Curiate	Tribal

Ordinary magistrates

Consul	Aedile
Praetor	Tribune
Quaestor	Censor
Promagistrate	Governor

Extraordinary magistrates

Corrector	Rex
Dictator	Triumviri
Magister equitum	Decemviri
Consular tribune	Interrex

Public law

<i>Mos maiorum</i>	<i>Senatus consultum</i>
<i>lus</i>	<i>Quaestio perpetua</i>
<i>Senatus consultum ultimum</i>	

Titles and honours

Emperor

<i>Legatus</i>	<i>Lictor</i>
<i>Dux</i>	<i>Magister militum</i>
<i>Officium</i>	<i>Imperator</i>
<i>Praeses</i>	<i>Princeps senatus</i>
<i>Praefectus</i>	<i>Pontifex maximus</i>
<i>Vicarius</i>	Augustus
<i>Vigintisexviri</i>	Caesar
<i>Triumvir monetalis</i>	Tetrarch

Other countries

V • T • E

populus: "the army, rule, judgments, offices, consuls and will of the Roman people". They appear in early Latin as *Popolus* and *Poplus*, so the habit of thinking of themselves as free and sovereign was quite ingrained.^[*citation needed*]

The Romans believed that all authority came from the people. It could be said that similar language seen in more modern political and social revolutions directly comes from this usage. People in this sense meant the whole government. The latter, however, was essentially divided into the aristocratic Senate, whose will was executed by the **consuls** and **praetors**, and the *comitia centuriata*, "committee of the centuries", whose will came to be safeguarded by the **Tribunes**.^[*citation needed*]

One of the ways the emperor **Commodus** (180–192) paid for his donatives and mass entertainments was to tax the senatorial order, and on many inscriptions, the traditional order is provocatively reversed (*Populus Senatusque...*).^[*citation needed*]

Medieval use [[edit](#)]



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Beginning in 1184, the **Commune of Rome** struck coins in the name of the SENATVS P Q R. From 1414 until 1517, the Roman Senate struck coins with a shield inscribed SPQR.

Modern use [[edit](#)]



Even in contemporary usage, SPQR is still used in the municipal coat of arms of Rome and as abbreviation for the **comune** of Rome in official documents.^{[2][3]} The Italians have long used a different and humorous expansion of this abbreviation, "*Sono Pazzi Questi Romani*" (lit. 'They're crazy, these Romans').^[4] SPQR is also part of the coat of arms of the Capital Military Command of the Italian army (Italian: *Comando Militare Capitale*).

In business, in English-speaking countries, SPQR is sometimes (humorously) used to mean "Small Profits, Quick Returns", often by people who have studied Latin at school.^[5]

Civic references [[edit](#)]



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SPQx is sometimes used as an assertion of municipal pride and civic rights. The Italian town of [Reggio Emilia](#), for instance, has SPQR in its coat of arms, standing for *Senatus Populusque Regiensis*. There are historic usages of the deployment of the "SPQx" format in various other cities and towns:

City	Country	SPQx	Latin	Where has it been used	Image
Alkmaar	 Netherlands	SPQA		On the façade of the Waag building	
Amsterdam	 Netherlands	SPQA	<i>Senatus Populusque Amstelodamensis</i> ^[6]	At the Stadsschouwburg theater on Leidseplein ^[7] and some of the bridges ^[6]	
Antwerp	 Belgium	SPQA	<i>Senatus Populusque Antverpensis</i>	On Antwerp City Hall and other public buildings and schools ^[8]	
Ascoli Piceno	 Italy	SPQA	<i>Senatus Populusque Asculum</i>	On the wall above the south loggia of the Piazza del Popolo	
Basel	 Switzerland	SPQB	<i>Senatus Populusque Basilea</i>	On the <i>Webern-Brunnen</i> in Steinenvorstadt ^[9]	
Benevento	 Italy	SPQB ^[10]	<i>Senatus Populusque Beneventanus</i> ^[10]	On manhole covers ^[10]	
Bologna	 Italy	SPQB	<i>Senatus Populusque Bonononiensis</i>	On the Fountain of Neptune	
Bremen	 Germany	SPQB		In Bremen City Hall . ^[11]	
Bruges	 Belgium	SPQB		On its coat of arms ^[12]	
Brussels	 Belgium	SPQB	<i>Senatus Populusque Bruxellensis</i> (of the city) or <i>Senatus Populusque Belgicus</i> (of the country)	Repeatedly on the Palace of Justice , ^[13] over the main stage of the Royal Theatre of La Monnaie ,	

				[citation needed] and on the ceiling of the hemicycle of the Belgian Senate in the Palace of the Nation.	
Capua	 Italy	SPQC			
Catania	 Italy	SPQC		On manhole covers	
Chicago	 United States	SPQC	<i>Senatus Populusque Chicago</i>	On the George N. Leighton Cook County Criminal Courthouse ^[14]	
Dublin	 Ireland	SPQH	<i>Senatus Populusque Hibernicus</i>	On the City Hall , built in 1769	
Florianópolis	 Brazil	SPQF ^[10]	<i>Senatus Populusque Florianopolitanus</i> ^[10]		
Franeker	 Netherlands	SPQF		At the a gate on the Westerbolwerk and Academiestraat 16 ^[15]	
Freising	 Germany	SPQF		Above the door of the town hall	
Ghent	 Belgium	SPQG	<i>Senatus Populusque Gandavensis</i>	On the opera house, theatre and some other major buildings, inscribed on a shield on coins struck in Ghent in 1583, during the Dutch Revolt ^[16]	
Groningen	 Netherlands	SPQG		Above the entrance of the Der Aa-kerk	
The Hague	 Netherlands	SPQH		Above the stage in the Koninklijke Schouwburg	

 mburg	 Germany	SPQH		On a door in the city hall (<i>Hamburg Rathaus</i>) ^[17]	
Hanover	 Germany				
Haarlem	 Netherlands	SPQH		On the façade of the town hall at the "Grote Markt"	
Hasselt	 Belgium	SPQH			
Hindeloopen	 Netherlands	SPQH	<i>Senatus Populusque Hindelopia</i> ^{[18][19]}	On a stone pole next to the Oosterdijk, a road between Hindeloopen and Workum .	
Istanbul	 Turkey	SPQC	<i>Senatus Populusque Constantinopolitanus</i>		
Kortrijk	 Belgium	SPQC	<i>Senatus Populusque Cortoriacum</i>	On the City hall	
Kraków	 Poland	SPQC	<i>Senatus Populusque Cracoviensis</i>	Over the Waza Gate in Wawel Castle	
La Plata	 Argentina	SPQR		On a monument outside of the city's <i>casco urbano</i>	
Leeuwarden	 Netherlands	SPQL	<i>Senatus Populusque Leovardia</i>	On the mayor's chain of office ^[20]	
Leuven	 Belgium	SPQL	<i>Senatus Populusque Leuvensis</i>	Over the painting of Jesus in the back reception room inside Leuven Town Hall	
Liverpool	 United Kingdom	SPQL	<i>Senatus Populusque Liverpooldiensis</i>	On various gold doors in St George's Hall ^[21]	
City of London	 United Kingdom	SPQL	<i>Senatus Populusque Londiniensis</i>	On historic variants of the City's coat of arms ^{[22][23]}	

 eck	 Germany	SPQL	<i>Senatus Populusque Lubecensis</i>	On the <i>Holstentor</i> ^[24]	
Lucerne	 Switzerland				
Madrid	 Spain	SPQM	<i>Senatus Populusque Matritensis</i>	On the Fuente de Apolo ^[es] , built in 1780	
Milan	 Italy	SPQM		The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V struck coins at Milan with the inscription <i>S P Q Mediol Optimo Principi</i> . ^[25]	
Modica	 Italy	SPQM		On the coat of arms ^[26]	
Molfetta	 Italy	SPQM		On the coat of arms ^[27]	
Naples	 Italy	SPQN	<i>Senatus Populusque Neāpolis</i>	Inscribed on a shield on coins struck during Masaniello's 1647 revolt ^[28]	
Noto	 Italy	SPQN	<i>Senatus Populusque Netum</i>	On the coat of arms ^[29] and the façade of Noto Cathedral .	
Nuremberg	 Germany	SPQN	<i>Senatus Populusque Norimbergensis</i>	On the Charles Bridge (one of the major bridges over river Pegnitz in the inner city) ^[30]	
Oudenburg	 Belgium	SPQO	<i>Senatus Populusque Odenburgensis</i>	On its water pump next to the market square ^[31]	
Olomouc	 Czech Republic	SPQO ^[10]	<i>Senatus Populusque Olomucensis</i>	On the coat of arms ^[32]	

 Teramo	 Italy	SPQP		[33]	
Teramo, Abruzzo	 Italy	SPQP		[33]	
Pontecorvo	 Italy	SPQF		Used as motto for municipal coat of arms	
Rieti	 Italy	SPQS	<i>Senatus Populusque Sabinus</i>	On the coat of arms, present also in the modern composite Lazio coat-of-arms	
Rotterdam	 Netherlands	SPQR		Mural in the <i>Burgerzaal</i> of Rotterdam City Hall	
Severn Beach	 United Kingdom	SPQR		On the crest of Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council	
Seville	 Spain	SPQH	<i>Senatus Populusque Hispalensis</i>	On the historic banner of the city	
Siena	 Italy	SPQS		On the base of a statue of the Capitoline Wolf ^[34]	
Solothurn	 Switzerland	SPQS	<i>Senatus Populusque Solodori</i>	On the Cathedral of St Ursus and Victor	
Terracina	 Italy	SPQT		[35]	
Tivoli, Lazio	 Italy	SPQT		[36]	
Toruń	 Poland	SPQT	<i>Senatus Populusque Thorunensis</i>	On the City Hall ^[37]	
Valencia	 Spain	SPQV	<i>Senatus Populusque Valentinus</i>	In several places and buildings, including the Silk Exchange ^[38] and the University of Valencia Historic Building. ^[39]	

 vriers	 Belgium	SPQV		On the Grand Theatre ^[40]	
Vienna	 Austria	SPQV ^[10]	<i>Senatus Populusque Viennensis</i> ^[10]	Above the main entrance of the civic armoury (<i>Bürgerliches Zeughaus</i>) at Am Hof, with a dedication to Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI (<i>Imperante Carolo VI. instauravit</i>) ^[41]	
Winschoten	 Netherlands	SPQW ^[42]	<i>Senatus Populesque Winschotanus</i>	On the façade of the municipal office (<i>stadhuis</i>) of Oldambt ^[42]	
Workum	 Netherlands	SPQW		On a stone pole next to the Oosterdijk, a road between Hindeloopen and Workum .	

Popular culture
 [[edit](#)]

SPQR is often used to represent the Roman Empire and Roman Republic, such as in video games and movies. In the 2000 movie *Gladiator*, the Roman general Maximus (portrayed by [Russell Crowe](#)) has "SPQR" tattooed on his upper arm, which he removes by scraping after he is sold into slavery.

The humorous modern Italian expansion *Sono Pazzi Questi Romani* (lit. 'They're crazy, these Romans') is used in the French *Ils sont fous, ces Romains !* (lit. 'They're crazy, these Romans') as the catchphrase of the character [Obelix](#) in the French comic album series *Asterix*, and the Italian original/[retranslation](#) (translating back to the original) *Sono Pazzi Questi Romani* is used in the Italian translation of Asterix, rendered with capitals to make the acronym clear,^[43] note that [Albert Uderzo](#), the co-creator of *Asterix*, was born to Italian immigrants and was exposed to Italian as a child.

Gallery
 [[edit](#)]



The inscription in the [Arch of Titus](#)



[Manhole](#) cover in Rome with SPQR inscription



SPQR in the coat of arms of [Reggio Emilia](#)



Detail from the mosaic floor in the [Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II](#) in Milan



"Superiority of the warrior class", by [Wenceslaus Hollar](#)



[Arch of Septimius Severus](#) top inscription



Dedicatory plaque to [Federico Fellini](#) on [Via Veneto](#)



Field symbol (right) at the [Belvedere](#) palace, Vienna

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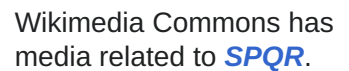
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