

# Greek/Roman Mystery



The Romans were noted for many achievements in the area of government and law. For instance, they initiated a form of representative government and a division of power among government branches.

Even though many modern political and judicial processes come from the Romans, the Athenians did originate one political process used in the United States today earlier than the Romans.

The objects at the top of this page were part of this early Athenian political process. *Name the process and describe its operation.*

## Answer to the Greek/Roman Mystery

The political process in the mystery is the voting process.

Originally used in Athens, the Romans adapted the voting procedures represented by the two objects in the mystery.

The object at the left is a voting vase, which was used to hold the “ballots” after the Roman Assemblymen voted.

The object at the right is a Roman ballot. Made of heavy wax, the ballot contained the names of the two contenders for political office (note the names across the top of the ring).

After hearing the two contenders speak, each Assemblyman would mark out the name of the candidate he did not want, thus leaving the name of his choice across the top.

After the ballots were cast, the vase was emptied and the votes counted to determine the winner.



Candidates had to make their own speeches. Nothing precluded having another person write the speech for the candidate, but rules prohibited anyone other than the candidate from delivering the speech before the gathered Assemblymen.

Other Roman voting procedures included the use of two disks (one with a hollow center and one with a solid center). A hollow disk meant a negative “NO” vote, while the solid center meant a “YES” vote on the issues involving legislative matters.