

# EARLY ROME

## THE BIRTH OF REPUBLIC

## THE MYTH OF ROME

- Virgil's AENEID
- Aeneas and the Trojans
  - Lieutenant to Hector
  - Son of Aphrodite (Venus)
- CARTHAGE – Queen Dido
- Settled in LATIUM in Central Italy



Peoples of early Italy

## THE FOUNDATION

- Romulus and Remus
  - Child of MARS and Rhea Silvia
  - Rhea Silvia descended from Aeneas
- Official foundation: April 21st 753 BC
- Romulus first KING

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL ROME

- Indo-European **Latin** people:
- Origins in central Europe
- Settled in central Italy, ca. 2000 BC
- Neighbors included
  - other Italic peoples (e.g. Sabines)
  - Etruscans to the North
  - Greeks to the South
- Village organization → small city states

# THE FOUNDATION

- Latins settled on the river TIBER
  - ca. 9th century BC
  - 7 neighboring hills
  - originally multiple villages
- Recent archaeology
  - evidence of city walls around the 7 hills
    - ca. mid 8th Century BC
    - Same place, date as in LEGEND

# WHO WERE THE ROMANS?

- Romans =
  - Latins
  - Sabines and other Italic peoples
  - Etruscans
- Bound together by :
  - Shared origin myth
  - Latin language = Indo-European, Italic
  - Shared Culture
    - merging of Latin, Greek and Etruscan cultures

# THE ROMAN KINGDOM

- 753 – 510 BC
- In legend only 7 kings
  - Romulus: 1st
  - L. Tarquinius Superbus: 7th and last
- King (Rex)
  - Head of state and government, military, religion
  - Elected by the people
  - Supreme power – IMPERIUM

# ADVISORY BODIES

- Senate
  - Legitimate, wealthy, noble males
  - 100 (heads of noble families)
  - Proposed new king
- Curiate Assembly (Comitia Curitiae)
  - Open to all PATRICIANS
  - Divided into 30 curiae (10 for each of 3 tribes)
  - Elected king

# ROMAN CITIZENS

- Free born males
- Two classes
  - Based on ancestry
  - Not allowed to intermarry

## **PATRICIANS**

- Descended from First Senate
- Noble, powerful
- Public office-holders

## **PLEBEIANS**

- All other freemen: farmers, artisans
- The “rabble,” “mob”
- Mass action

## OTHER CLASSES

- Women
  - took social class of father / husband
- Foreigners
  - Latins vs others
  - Free-born vs others
- Freedmen
- Slaves
  - Debt, spoils of war, birth

## THE LAST KING

- Etruscan nobles dominated
- TARQUINIUS SUPERBUS
  - Etruscan origin
  - Violent, impious
  - Rape of Lucretia
- Expelled 510 BC



The Rape of Lucretia  
Titian, ca. 1570

## SPQR

- Founded 509 BC
- Checks and Balances
- Loyalty to FAMILY and STATE
- Mixed government:
  - Assemblies + Senate + Magistrates
  - Legislative + Deliberative + Executive
  - Democracy + Oligarchic + Monarchic

# ASSEMBLIES

## “THE PEOPLE”

Ultimate legislative and judicial power

- Elected magistrates
- Oversaw trials, last court of appeal
- Voted yes/no on laws
- Could not propose laws
- Could reject laws including going to war

## FOUR ASSEMBLIES

- CURIATA and CALATA
  - Patricians only
  - Limited powers reduced over time
- CENTURIATE and TRIBAL
  - All citizens
  - Divided into voting blocs by class or tribe
  - Elected magistrates
  - Passed laws
  - Oversaw justice

## PLEBEIAN COUNCIL

- Elected PLEBEIAN TRIBUNE
- Enacted laws
- Plebiscites
- Power of Veto
- Grew in power ⇒  
DOMINANT LEGISLATIVE POWER

## THE SENATE

- Council of Elders (senex = old man)
  - 300 and later to ~600+
  - Patricians and (later) rich Plebeians
  - Ex-magistrates or appointed by Censors
- Conducted foreign policy
- Controlled all funds
- Appointed governors and other officials
- Could declare martial law
- Could propose laws

# MAGISTRATES

- Executive and Judicial powers
- Two characteristics
  - Collegiality
    - One or more colleagues
  - Limits
    - 1 year terms
    - No consecutive terms

# CURSUS HONORUM

- 10 years MILITARY SERVICE
- Junior Magistracies:
  - Elected by the Tribal Assembly
  - Quaestors, Aediles
  - Led to a seat in the SENATE
- PRAETORS
  - Elected by the Centuriate Assembly
  - Administered JUSTICE
    - Urban Praetor was “Chief Justice”

# CONSULS

- Elected by the Centuriate Assembly
  - Initially only Patricians; later either
  - 2 consuls, each could veto the other
  - 10 years between terms
- Commander in Chief of Armed Forces
- Chaired Senate
- Supreme judicial power
- Oversaw the most important provinces
- Oversaw domestic and foreign policy

# Other POSITIONS

- PROPRAETORIAN and PROCONSULAR GOVERNORS
  - Appointed by the Senate
  - Administered provinces (civilian and military)
  - Headed the army in their province
- CENSOR
  - Elected by the Centuriate Assembly
  - Could add or remove Senators

# THE ROMAN MILITARY

- Every male property owning citizen
- Service was for 16 years
- Infantry and Cavalry
- Brutal but effective discipline
- Strong personal loyalty to generals

# EXPANSION

FEAR or AMBITION?

- 387            Gauls invade and sack Rome
- 264            Controls all of Italian peninsula
- 264-241        First Punic War
- 218–201        Second Punic War
- 214–167        Macedonian Wars
- 210–206        Conquest of Spain
- 149            Conquest of Greece
- 149–146        Third Punic War

