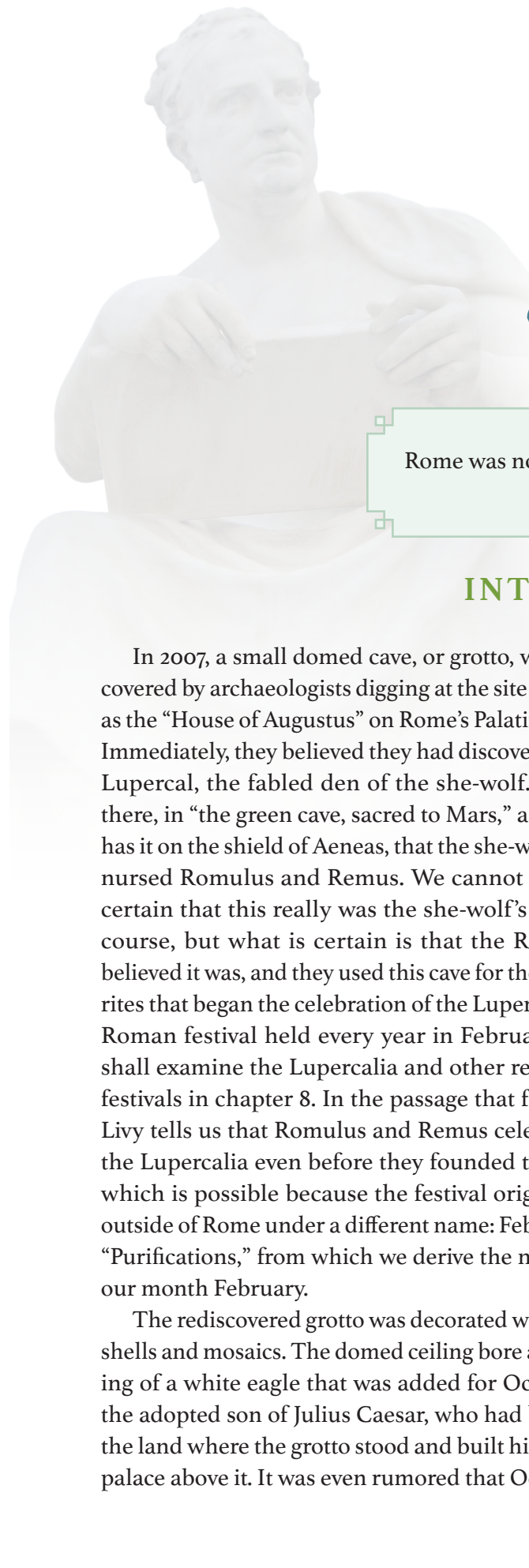




2

Founding Rome

Rome was not built in a day.

—Ancient Proverb

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, a small domed cave, or grotto, was discovered by archaeologists digging at the site known as the “House of Augustus” on Rome’s Palatine Hill. Immediately, they believed they had discovered the Lupercal, the fabled den of the she-wolf. It was there, in “the green cave, sacred to Mars,” as Virgil has it on the shield of Aeneas, that the she-wolf had nursed Romulus and Remus. We cannot say for certain that this really was the she-wolf’s lair, of course, but what is certain is that the Romans believed it was, and they used this cave for the secret rites that began the celebration of the Lupercalia, a Roman festival held every year in February. We shall examine the Lupercalia and other religious festivals in chapter 8. In the passage that follows, Livy tells us that Romulus and Remus celebrated the Lupercalia even before they founded the city, which is possible because the festival originated outside of Rome under a different name: Februa, or “Purifications,” from which we derive the name of our month February.

The rediscovered grotto was decorated with sea-shells and mosaics. The domed ceiling bore a painting of a white eagle that was added for Octavian, the adopted son of Julius Caesar, who had bought the land where the grotto stood and built himself a palace above it. It was even rumored that Octavian

planned to change his name to Romulus. Instead, he took the name Augustus when he became Rome’s first emperor. His actions reveal how important the city’s foundation myth was to Octavian, who claimed familial ties to Aeneas through his adopted father, Julius Caesar, and who laid out grand plans to rebuild and refound Rome when he became the emperor Augustus. We shall turn to these plans when we read about the Age of Augustus and the buildings of the city of Rome in later chapters.

Livy, like Virgil, lived at the time of Augustus. He understood the importance of the foundation myths to the new emperor, and he told the stories well with lots of details that deserve our careful attention. Roman readers were expert at spotting allusions, indirect or passing references, and reading between the lines. They would have understood far more of what Livy was saying than we can ever hope to know. However, if we read closely and carefully, we can also pick up allusions and understand the significance of information that is spelled out in the text. For example, Livy tells us that Romulus and Remus chose different Roman hills from which to observe birds, looking for omens and portents as to what they should name their city and who should be its king. Romulus watched from the Palatine Hill, which included the very place where the twins had

been rescued by the she-wolf. Remus chose the Aventine where, Livy tells us, there was a shrine to the boys' ancestor, Aventinus. Romulus chose more wisely: he became king and named the city Rome, not "Remora." Although Livy does not tell us explicitly, we can now guess why, when Romulus came to draw the sacred boundary of Rome, the *pomerium*, he excluded the Aventine, making it the only one of Rome's seven hills not to be within the city. This remained the case in Livy's own lifetime. It was only after Livy's death that the emperor Claudius, in AD 49, extended the *pomerium* to include the Aventine.¹

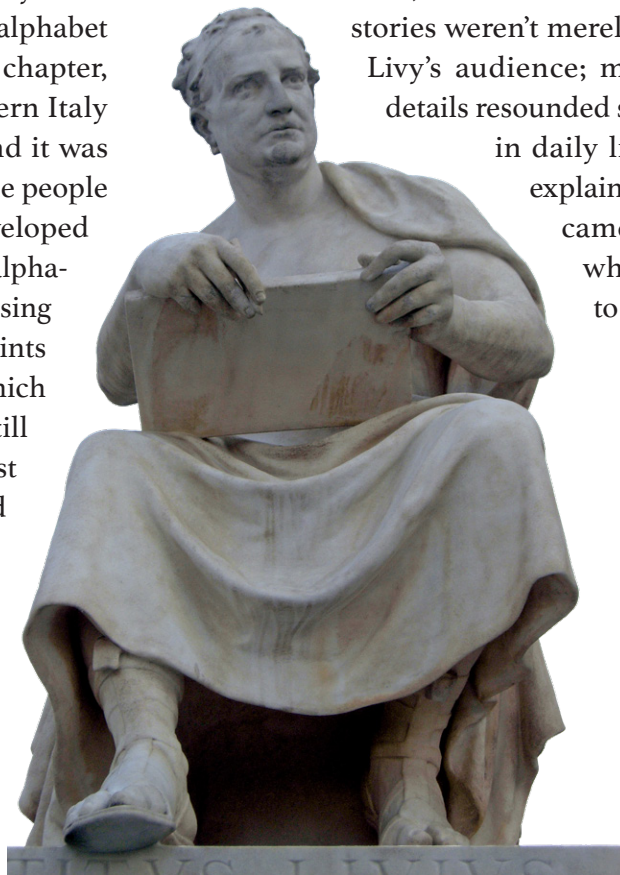
Although Romulus and Remus were descended from Trojans, the region around Rome also had mythical Greek kings, and heroes of Greek myth such as Hercules (Heracles in Greek) had wandered the countryside. Livy tells of Evander, a Greek emigrant from the Peloponnesus in southern Greece, who became king of Pallantium, an ancient city near the Tiber, and who was the first man of Italy who understood Greek letters. This is a mythical interpretation of the arrival of the Greek alphabet in Italy. As we shall see in the following chapter, there were indeed Greek cities in southern Italy where the Greek alphabet was used, and it was through contact with these Greeks that the people of Etruria, called the Etruscans, first developed their own alphabet, from which the Latin alphabet would eventually be derived. Livy's passing mention of Evander's letters, therefore, hints at the origins not only of the alphabet which the Romans used, but the letters that we still use today to write English, as well as most other languages throughout Europe and the Americas.²

Livy's stories also introduce us to more troubling episodes in Rome's early history, for example the capture of women from a neighboring city, generally called the "Abduction of the Sabines." Even in Livy's time, it was not uncommon for people who were not Roman citizens to

be taken from their homes as captives or prisoners-of-war, and many of them were enslaved. In this episode, however, the Sabine women do not become slaves but are taken as wives by Roman men. When the Sabine men, fathers and brothers, fight the Romans in an attempt to liberate their daughters and sisters, the women intervene to stop the battle. They had now switched allegiance to their husbands. In Roman thought and law, women owed loyalty to their fathers and brothers until they married, after which they owed an even greater loyalty to their husbands. Ideas like these are explored in many of Livy's stories, as we shall see again in chapter 4.

Virgil and Livy both wrote about the founding of Rome, though with different ends in view. Virgil's *Aeneid* served to connect the story of Rome's founding with the myths of ancient Greece and to claim divine sanction for the empire. Livy's history sought to collect the various Roman myths about the city's origins, to explain how various Roman customs,

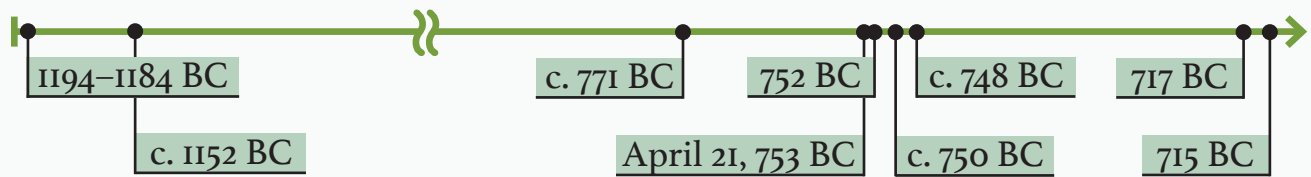
beliefs, and laws came to be. The stories weren't merely history to Livy's audience; many of the details resounded significantly in daily life, helping explain how things came to be and what it meant to be Roman.



1. Lisa Marie Mignone, "Rome's Pomerium and the Aventine Hill: from auguraculum to imperium sine fine," *Historia* vol. 65, no. 4 (2016), 427–49.

2. Rex Wallace, "The Latin Alphabet and Orthography," in *A Companion to the Latin Language*, ed. James Clarkson (London and New York: Wiley, 2011), 9–28.

Time Line



1194–1184 BC — Traditional dates for the Trojan War.

c. 1152 BC — Ascanius, son of Aeneas, founds the kingdom of Alba Longa and begins a long dynasty.

c. 771 BC — Romulus and Remus are born in Alba Longa and abandoned in the wilds shortly after their birth.

April 21, 753 BC — Romulus founds the city of Rome and rules as its first king.

752 BC — Romulus celebrates the first Roman triumph, defeating the Caeninenses who had

attacked the Romans after their alleged theft of the Sabine women.

c. 750 BC — Titus Tatius declares war on the Romans, but the Sabines intervene to end the threat. He then rules jointly with Romulus.

c. 748 BC — Titus Tatius dies.

717 BC — Romulus dies or disappears; a brief interregnum period begins in Rome. Eventually, the Senate will rule in lieu of a king.

715 BC — The Sabine Numa Pompilius is chosen by the Senate to become the second king of Rome.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Historian of Character

While many of his Roman predecessors were politicians who wrote history to advance political agendas, Livy was not a statesman. He lacked access to public documents such as treaties, law codes, and municipal records. Yet for Livy, the most important thing to record was the moral character of the individuals who shaped history. In his preface, Livy writes that he hopes to show his readers the kinds of men and the qualities that made Rome great. His approach to history influenced later writers such as Tacitus and even early modern English historians, like Edward Gibbon, who saw the moral character of a country as the decisive factor shaping its subsequent history.

◆ Milky Richness

Most Roman historians prior to Livy tried to copy Greek writers in language and style. Many Romans wrote in Greek, while others adopted Greek syntax and old-fashioned words. Livy, on the other hand, wrote in a flexible Latin style that he varied according to the content: speeches would use more formal language, while his narratives were much simpler. The later Roman orator and educator Quintilian characterized Livy's style as having a “milky richness.”



MARS AND RHEA SILVIA

The Roman god Mars, aided by two cupids, approaches the Vestal Virgin Rhea Silvia as she guards Rome's sacred flame. Rhea Silvia's purity, symbolized by her white robe and reluctant posture, contrasts sharply with the passion of Mars. Flemish Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens's dynamic style captures the heightened emotion of their meeting.



From the Founding of the City

Livy
c. 27–9 BC

forest

The name “Silvius” comes from the Latin word for “forest,” *silvia*.

cognomen

An additional, personal name—like a nickname—often passed from Roman fathers to sons.

hill

The Aventine is the southernmost of Rome's seven hills.

Vestal Virgin

These six priestesses of Vesta, virgin goddess of the hearth, were the protectors of Rome's sacred flame. Their virginity was fiercely guarded: any Vestal who broke her vows of purity was entombed alive.

Mars

the Roman god of war and the father of the twins Romulus and Remus

cruelty

Amulius sought to destroy the boys for fear they would avenge Numitor, their maternal grandfather and the rightful king.

THE BIRTH OF ROMULUS AND REMUS

Ascanius, the son of Aeneas, was succeeded by his son Silvius, who by some chance had been born in the **forest**. He became the father of Aeneas Silvius, who in his turn had a son, Latinus Silvius, a founder of several colonies. The **cognomen** of Silvius was common to all the remaining kings of Alba, each of whom succeeded his father. Their names are Alba, Atys, Capys, Capetus, and Tiberinus, who drowned while crossing the river that has been known as the Tiber ever since. Then came his son Agrippa and, after him, his son Romulus Silvius. He was struck by lightning and left the crown to his son Aventinus, whose shrine was on the **hill** that bears his name and is now a part of the city of Rome. He was succeeded by Proca, who had two sons, Numitor and Amulius.

As the eldest, Numitor was given the ancient throne, but his younger brother Amulius seized the crown from him. Adding crime to crime, Amulius murdered his brother's sons and prevented Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, from having any children by making her a **Vestal Virgin**.

Yet the Fates had already proclaimed that this great city would rise from the line of Numitor, that it would become the foundation of the mightiest empire under heaven. Sometime later, the Vestal was forcibly violated and gave birth to twins. She claimed that **Mars** was their father. Neither the gods nor men sheltered her or her babies from the king Amulius's **cruelty**. Rhea Silvia was thrown into prison, and her twins were ordered to be drowned in the Tiber River.

By chance, it happened that the Tiber was at that time flooding its banks, which made access to the main part of the river very difficult. The men carrying the children thought that the water on the banks would be enough to drown them, so under the impression that they were carrying out the king's orders, they **exposed** the boys in a basket at the nearest point of the overflow. The tradition goes on to say that the water receded, leaving the basket upon dry ground. Soon after this, a **she-wolf** who lived in the surrounding hills heard the babies crying and came to their aid. She fed them from her teats and was so gentle towards them that the king's shepherd, Faustulus, found her licking the boys. He took the twins home to raise them.



VESTAL VIRGIL

Angelica Kauffman painted this after studying classical sculpture in Rome. The vestal shown mirrors the sculpture over her right shoulder as the piece playfully teases out the boundary between art and life.

exposed

A form of infanticide, or killing unwanted children, was to expose them to the elements.

she-wolf

The she-wolf, lupa in Latin, became an important symbol in the Roman world with statues of the animal nursing the twins eventually cropping up all over the empire. The image also appears on the shield of Aeneas; see HARI, chapter 1.

THE IDENTIFY OF ROMULUS AND REMUS DISCOVERED

When the boys grew to be young men, they did not neglect their duties as shepherds but enjoyed roaming the woods on hunting expeditions. As their strength and courage developed, they not only used to lie in wait for fierce beasts but even attacked robbers they found loaded with loot. They distributed what they took among the young shepherds and became their companions in both serious matters and leisurely pastimes.

On the festival of the **Lupercalia**, while the two brothers were celebrating, the robbers, angry at losing their plunder, ambushed them. Romulus managed to fight them off, but Remus was taken prisoner and brought before Amulius. Remus's captors falsely accused him of their own crimes of theft: the main charge brought against them was of invading Numitor's lands and carrying off **plunder** as though in regular warfare. Remus accordingly was handed over to **Numitor** for punishment.

Years earlier, when Faustulus discovered the boys and took them into his home, he immediately suspected the twins were royal offspring. He knew they had been taken to the river at the king's command and that the time of their exposure corresponded exactly with the royal decree. He had, however, refused to reveal this information until opportunity or necessity demanded it. Necessity came first. Worried over the safety of Remus, he revealed everything to Romulus. Just as this was happening, Numitor had Remus in his custody and was questioning him about the thefts. During this meeting, Numitor learned that Remus had a twin brother, and when he compared their ages, character, and posture—so unlike that of a lowly shepherd—he began to recall the memory of his grandchildren. Further questions brought him to the same conclusion as Faustulus: Remus was his grandson.

Lupercalia

A Roman festival that took place every year on February 15th. Its purpose was to purify the city and promote fertility. According to Livy, the festival predates the founding of Rome.

plunder

During warfare, this would have been normal and expected, but it was a crime in times of peace.

Numitor

Amulius murdered Numitor's sons, but he did not kill Numitor himself. He allowed his older brother to live under close watch within his kingdom.

When it was revealed to Romulus that Numitor was his grandfather and that the throne had been stolen from him, he immediately launched an attack against King Amulius. Understanding that he was no match for the king in an open fight, he gathered the shepherds together and sent them on different routes to reach the king's palace at a predetermined time. Remus also collected

a band of armed men and followed Romulus. The

plan worked, and King Amulius

was slain in battle.

Hearing of the assassination, many young men came forward to congratulate Numitor since they knew about the treachery Amulius had committed.

Numitor took the opportunity to tell the people about his grandsons, how they were fed by a she-wolf, raised by a shepherd, and the circumstances

through which he came

to recognize them. Then the twins marched through the midst of the assembly and saluted their grandfather as king. When they did this, the whole population roared their approval. With one voice the city ratified the title and sovereignty of the king.

THE TWINS ESTABLISH THEIR OWN CITY

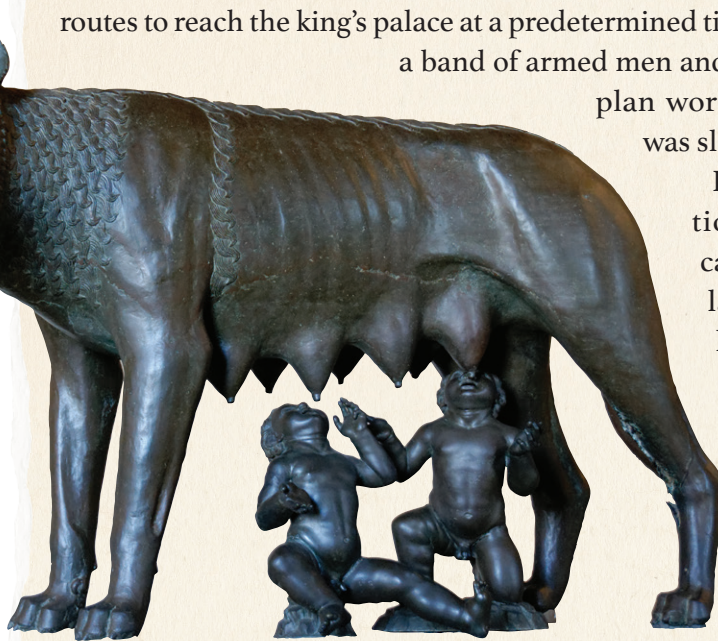
After the government of Alba was transferred to Numitor, its rightful ruler, Romulus and Remus set their sights on establishing a city of their own, desiring to lay the foundations in the place where they had been nursed by the she-wolf. Gazed upon the overpopulated Alban and Latin towns, the twins believed they would one day be considered small compared to the city they would build.

But alas, their excitement was soon disturbed by an old, ancestral curse. Ambition reared its ugly head through what seemed at first a trivial matter. The men knew they were twins, but they never had a reason to consider who was the elder brother. Now the matter would have to be discovered since their city would be named after the oldest. They agreed to consult the **tutelary deities** of that place using **augury** to determine, not only what the city was to be named, but who would rule it once it had been founded. Romulus accordingly selected the **Palatine Hill** as his place for observation, Remus chose the Aventine.

Remus is said to have been the first to receive an omen—six vultures appeared to him. But as soon as the augury had been announced to Romulus, twice the number of vultures appeared to him. As a result, each man was hailed as king by his own party. The men on Remus's side said that since he saw the birds first, he should rule. Romulus's party claimed that he should be king,

LUPA WITH REMUS AND ROMULUS

This is the famous Roman sculpture of the Lupa, the she-wolf, nursing the twins Romulus and Remus. While the wolf is an Etruscan bronze from the fifth century BC, the twins were added in the fifteenth century AD by sculptor Antonio del Pollaiuolo to illustrate the legend of Romulus and Remus.



tutelary deities

The term “tutelary” means “protection,” so these deities would be gods or spirits who served as guardians, patrons, or protectors of a particular place, person, lineage, or occupation.

augury

In the Roman world, this practice involved interpreting omens. Common forms of augury included examining the flight patterns of birds or the entrails of animals after they had been sacrificed.

Palatine Hill

Referred to as the first nucleus of the Roman Empire, this was where the twins were nursed by the she-wolf. One of the seven hills of Rome, the hill would be the future home of the imperial palaces.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

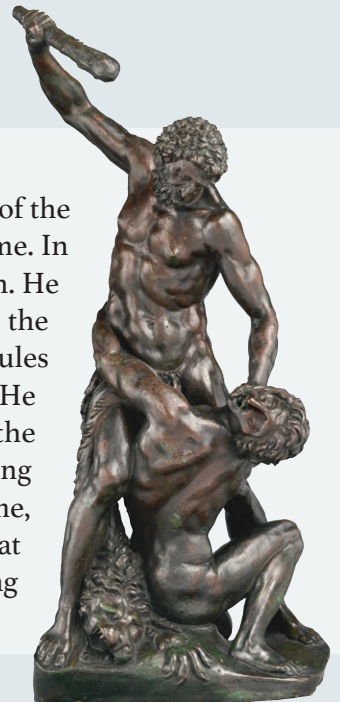
◆ The Sabines Join Rome



The Sabines were an ancient Italian people, a group of tribes who lived in the mountainous regions east of the Tiber River in Italy. A western branch settled on the Quirinal and Capitoline hills in Rome. Although the story of the rape of the Sabine women is legendary, the tribes did join with the Roman community on the Palatine hill to form a stronger state after a period of conflicts. Romulus is said to have shared sovereignty with the Sabines, co-ruling with the Sabine king Titus Tatius. The legendary second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, was also a Sabine. By the end of the fifth century BC, the Romans had expanded and added even more eastern Sabine tribes to their state. The Sabines were noted for their honesty and simple lives, and for being especially brave warriors. History and legend agree that they became an integral part of the growing city of Rome after an early series of conflicts.

◆ Hercules in Italy

Livy's update to his predecessors' writing style is especially clear in his portrayal of the legendary figure of Cacus, a scourge on the land that would eventually become Rome. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil describes Cacus as a fire-breathing monster who eats human flesh. He tells how one day Hercules woke up to find some cattle missing and traced them to the Aventine hill. There, the monster Cacus had barricaded himself inside a cave. Hercules was unable to find a way in, so he finally knocked off the top of the hill with his club. He threw rocks at Cacus, but the monster cloaked himself in a smoky cloud. Finally, the frustrated strongman jumped down into the cave and choked Cacus to death. Contrasting with this fantastical account of Hercules's defeat of Cacus near the future site of Rome, Livy portrays Cacus as a real human thief. Regardless of his shape, all sources agree that Cacus's defeat was historically significant: it served as the basis for a festival honoring Hercules at the Great Altar in the Forum Boarium, the cattle market of Rome.



◆ Rationalist

Although Livy recorded many legendary stories in his accounts of early history, he also expressed some doubt about their reliability. In his preface he states that he will not insist on the truthfulness of the early poets, even though tradition asserts many miraculous things, such as the city of Rome owing its origins to Mars, the god of war. For example, in his account of Rhea Silvia, the mother of Romulus and Remus, Livy records the popular story—that Mars was their father—but he adds an editorial comment, saying that Rhea Silvia may have been covering up her own transgressions. When he retells the legend of the she-wolf nursing the twins, Livy adds that “she-wolf” may have been a subtle reference to Faustus's wife, who was probably a

prostitute. Similarly, he reports that while Romulus was caught up to heaven at the end of his life, other accounts insist that he was murdered by Roman senators. Livy was not reluctant to use the old stories to add dignity to Rome, but he often offered the reader natural explanations as well.

FAUSTULUS WITH ROMULUS AND REMUS

French painter Nicolas Mignard shows Faustulus bringing the twins Romulus and Remus home to raise with his wife. Their position and posture hint at their future rivalry, and the brightly colored drapery of this Baroque painting draw the viewers' eyes across the canvas.



Hercules

He was the Roman equivalent to the Greek hero Heracles, the son of Jupiter and a mortal woman named Alcmene. He was known for his great strength and the many labors which took him all over the world (see HAGI, chapter 5).

Evander

A hero from Arcadia in Greece who purportedly first brought the Greek alphabet, laws, and religion to Italy some sixty years before the Trojan War. He is specifically credited with setting up the Great Altar of Hercules in the place where Rome was later founded.

Geryon

A monster said to live in “the West,” Livy places him in Italy or Magna Graecia, “greater Greece.” He was described variously as having multiple heads, multiple limbs, and even multiple bodies. One of Hercules’s labors was to steal the cattle of Geryon.

based on the number of birds that appeared. The two groups clashed, and blood was drawn. In the commotion, Remus was killed. The common report is that Remus jumped over the newly raised walls and was at once killed by the enraged Romulus, who screamed, “This will happen to anyone who ever leaps over my walls.” Thus Romulus became the sole ruler, and the city was named “Rome” after him, its founder.

WHERE HERCULES ONCE WALKED

Romulus’s first task was to strengthen the Palatine Hill where he had been brought up. For the worship of some of the deities, he followed the traditions of Alba—but in honor of **Hercules**, he adopted the Greek rites as they had been established by **Evander**, a refugee from the Peloponnesus. For it was in this area, according to the tradition, that Hercules, after he had killed **Geryon**, grazed his most beautiful oxen. He swam across the Tiber, driving the beasts before him. Then, exhausted from his journey, he laid down in a grassy place near the river to sleep and allow the animals to feed on the rich pasture. When he fell asleep, drowsy with food and wine, a shepherd living nearby called Cacus was captivated by the beauty of his oxen and became determined to steal them. He sought to avoid detection by dragging the finest of them backwards by their tails into his dwelling, hoping that in this way their hoofmarks would not betray their location.

At the first streak of dawn, Hercules awoke and discovered that some of his herd was missing. Thus, he proceeded towards the nearest cave, to see if any tracks pointed in that direction, but he found that every hoofmark led away from the cave and that none led towards it. Puzzled and confused, he began to drive the herd away from such a dangerous place. When some of the cattle, missing those which had been left behind, called out to them, lowing as they often do, an answering call came from the cave. Immediately, Hercules turned in that direction and struck Cacus a deadly blow of his club when the shepherd made ready to attack him.

EVANDER HELPS HERCULES

The king of the country at that time was Evander, who ruled more by personal influence than by the exercise of force. He was widely respected for his knowledge of **letters**—a new and marvelous thing for uncivilized men—but he was still more revered because of his mother. Many believed she was a **divine being** who could interpret Fate in the days before the **Sibyls** arrived in Italy.

After Hercules had slayed Cacus, a crowd of angry shepherds surrounded him, accusing him of murder. This alarmed Evander, who saw that a riot was about to break out. Thus, he questioned the stranger and asked him what his motives were for killing the shepherd. As the man began to answer his questions, Evander became awestruck at the size of the man and reasoned that he was not entirely human.

Questioning him about where he had come from and who his parents were, Evander realized who he was speaking to and exclaimed, “Hercules, son of Jupiter! My mother has prophesied that you would come here! You are destined to join the company of the gods, and a shrine will be dedicated to you where we now stand. In the ages to come, the most powerful nation in all the world will call this altar **Ara Maxima** and honor you with special worship.” Hercules grasped Evander’s right hand and said he would fulfill the prophecy himself by building and consecrating the altar. Immediately after this happened, a beautiful heifer was taken from the herd, and the first sacrifice to Hercules was offered.

The **Potitii and Pinarii**, the two principal families in those parts, were invited by Hercules to assist in the sacrifice and at the feast that followed. As it happened, the Potitii were present at the appointed time, and so the entrails were placed before them. The Pinarii arrived after these were consumed, coming in for the rest of the banquet. It became a permanent institution from that

letters

That is, Evander was a widely regarded scholar. “Men of letters” referred to those learned in philosophy, poetry, and literature.

divine being

Evander was believed to be the son of Mercury (Hermes) and a nymph; her ability to predict the future made her especially important in ancient Rome.

Sibyls

Female prophets who foretold the future; their prophecies were recorded in the famous Sibylline Books, an incomplete set acquired by the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus, and frequently consulted throughout the history of Rome.

Ara Maxima

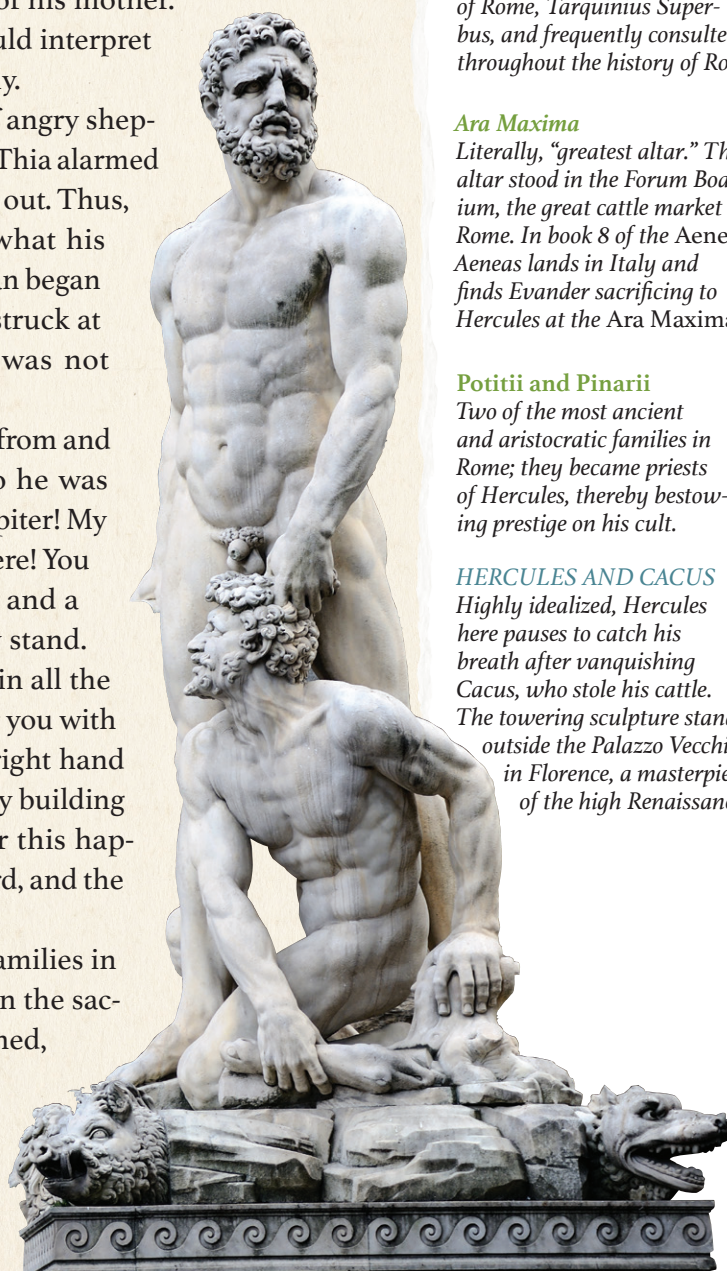
Literally, “greatest altar.” The altar stood in the Forum Boarium, the great cattle market of Rome. In book 8 of the Aeneid, Aeneas lands in Italy and finds Evander sacrificing to Hercules at the Ara Maxima.

Potitii and Pinarii

Two of the most ancient and aristocratic families in Rome; they became priests of Hercules, thereby bestowing prestige on his cult.

HERCULES AND CACUS

Highly idealized, Hercules here pauses to catch his breath after vanquishing Cacus, who stole his cattle. The towering sculpture stands outside the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, a masterpiece of the high Renaissance.



HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

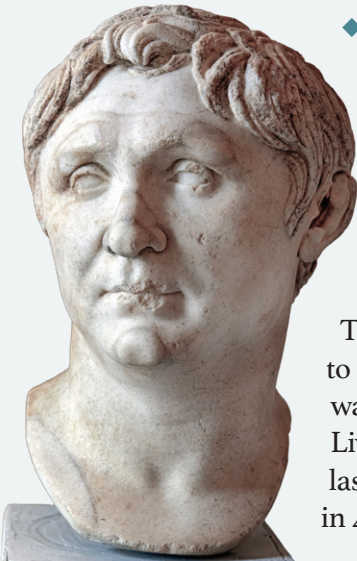
◆ First Messenian War

The rulers of Sparta became convinced that they needed more land to sustain their growing population. In 730 BC, they attacked and conquered a neighboring kingdom called Messenia, which won them forty percent of the Peloponnesian peninsula, greatly increasing their territory. The Messenian population was reduced to slavery, becoming the class known as helots. These serfs worked the agricultural estates of their Spartan masters, allowing the Spartan citizen class to devote themselves entirely to military training. Sparta was thus able to develop a fulltime professional army, unlike most Greek states that relied upon citizen militias for defense. Although the first war ended about 710 BC, there was a revolt in the next century, which Sparta was able to suppress. From time to time, the Messenian helots would try (and fail) to regain their freedom, which led to a Spartan custom of declaring war on them every year. The helots were finally liberated by Theban leader Epaminondas after his victory over Sparta at Leuctra in 371 BC.



◆ Pompeian

Livy had a unique relationship with Augustus. The emperor apparently admired the historian's work, for he appointed Livy to be the tutor of young prince Claudius, the future emperor who trained as a historian before he came to the throne. Yet Livy never received patronage from Augustus, unlike other authors of the "Golden Age" of Latin literature. On one occasion, Augustus referred to Livy as a "Pompeian," i.e., a supporter of Pompey the Great, who had been a rival of Julius Caesar and thus an enemy of Augustus. This reference to Livy as Pompeian may simply have meant that Livy was known to be free in his criticisms of the imperial regime. Whether Augustus's comment was an accusation of treason or a subtle critique is unclear. But we do know that Livy, perhaps taking the hint, waited until Augustus died before publishing the last twenty books of his *History*, which deal with events from the death of Caesar in 44 BC to 9 BC.



◆ Numa Pompilius

According to legend, the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, was a Sabine who was especially devoted to religion. He reigned from 715 to 673 BC, and tradition holds that he created the religious calendar of Rome, the Vestal Virgins, and the cults of Mars, Jupiter, and Quirinus (a deified version of Romulus, worshipped as a god after his death). Numa also established the office of Pontifex Maximus, the highest priest in Roman religion. Numa was said to have received wise counsel and instruction in piety from the nymph Egeria, a water sprite connected to the goddess Diana. Whereas Romulus had been a great warrior and leader, Numa was portrayed as advancing Roman civilization through religion. Traditional accounts of these first two Roman kings hold that Romulus taught the Romans to fight, while Numa taught them to pray.



time that for as long the family of the Pinarii survived, they should not eat of the entrails of the sacrifices. The Potitii, after being instructed by Evander, presided over that rite for many ages, until they handed over this governmental office to public servants, after which the whole race of the Potitii perished. This, out of all foreign religious rites, was the only one Romulus adopted.

ROMULUS STRENGTHENS HIS CITY

Meanwhile, Rome was growing and extending its walls in every direction, in anticipation of its future population. Yet for the time being, it was still a small city. Romulus's next concern was to increase the population so the city would not appear weak in the eyes of their neighbors. It had been the ancient policy of the founders of cities to gather people of obscure and low origin and then to spread the fiction that they were the children of the **soil**. In accordance with this, Romulus opened a place of refuge. A multitude of freemen and slaves, eager for a change in their status, fled there from the neighboring states. This increase in population added strength to the city.

His next goal was to provide wise guidance for the people who had just arrived, and so he called a hundred men to serve as **senators**. He picked a hundred either because that number was adequate, or because there were only a hundred heads of houses at that time. In any case, they were called **Patres** in virtue of their rank, and their descendants were called **Patricians**.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE SABINES

Rome had become so strong that it could match any of its neighbors in war. However, its greatness threatened to last for only one generation since there were no women, no hope of offspring, and no right of intermarriage with their neighbors. Acting on the advice of the Senate, Romulus sent envoys to the surrounding nations to ask for alliances and the right to marry their women and bring them into his new city. The envoys tried to persuade these nations by reminding them that whenever a city sprung from humble beginnings, acted courageously, and experienced the favor of heaven they always became great and renowned. Then they reminded the neighboring nations of Rome's origins, that it had received **divine assistance**, and that the courage and self-reliance of its people were also strong. They did this hoping to persuade their neighbors, showing there was no cause for reluctance to marry and mix their bloodlines.

Nowhere did the envoys find anyone willing to join Rome. On the contrary, there was rather great alarm that the power of this new city was growing so rapidly in their midst and would prove to be a threat to the surrounding states. Typically, the messengers were mocked by the people, saying things such as, "Perhaps you should open a refuge for desperate women. Maybe then you will



soil

In many Greek foundation myths, people often portrayed their founders as autochthonous, or literally "sprung from the soil." See book 2 of Homer's Iliad, or the end of book 3 of Plato's Republic, by way of example.

senators

The words senator and senate are derived from the Latin word senex, meaning "old man." For the most part, Roman senators were aged members of the elite class.

FOUNDERS OF ROME

Neoclassical Italian sculptor Carlo Brogi sculpted the profiles of the twins Romulus and Remus as adults. The late nineteenth century work was created from a fifteenth century sculptural frieze.

Patres . . . Patricians

Meaning, "fathers"; these men would become the Patricians, the most elite class of men in Rome.

divine assistance

The gods promised Aeneas that he would establish a second, greater Troy in Italy. This promise was fulfilled in the founding of Latium, the region of central western Italy where Aeneas's descendants would found Rome.

THE ABDUCTION OF THE SABINE WOMEN

French Baroque painter Nicholas Poussin created his version of the Abduction of the Sabine Women while he was living in Rome and displayed his knowledge of ancient architecture and sculpture. He used a dramatic composition to capture the struggle between the Romans and the Sabine women that they kidnap.



Consualia

The Roman games established by Romulus became part of the harvest festivals that sought to honor the several gods associated with grain and the harvest.

Sabines

an Italic people who lived in central Italy

plebeians

These were the average working citizens of Rome: farmers, bakers, builders, or craftsmen. Plebeians were commoners, distinct from the patrician class, the ruling class of Rome.

laws of hospitality

Laws of hospitality were almost universally sacred in the ancient world, and to violate them was a crime against the gods. For those granting hospitality, it was required to treat their guests well. The Romans violated these laws by abducting the Sabine women.

find people to marry.” Tired of these insults, the Roman youth saw that they would have to appeal to arms.

A plan was hatched by Romulus. Disguising his anger, he made elaborate preparations for the celebration of games in honor of Equestrian Neptune, which he called the **Consualia**. He sent word about the event to all the surrounding cities and had his people work hard to make the celebration as magnificent as possible. Expectations were high as the people were eager not only to attend the festival but also to see the new city of Rome.

All their nearest neighbors were in attendance, including the **Sabines**, who brought their entire population—wives and children in addition to their men. The guests were granted hospitality at the different houses, and after examining the city, its walls, and the large number of dwellings, all the peoples were astonished at the speed with which Rome had grown.

When the time for the games had come, the masses became fixated on the spectacle and all the activities going on at the festival. It was at this time that a signal was given, and the Roman youth dashed in all directions to carry off the women who were present. While most of the maidens were carried off at random, some particularly beautiful girls had been marked out in advance and taken to the homes of some leading **plebeians**. Alarm and dread fell upon the games as the parents of the maidens were shocked and overwhelmed with grief. They spoke bitter curses upon the violators of the **laws of hospitality** and appealed to the god whose solemn games they had come to honor, only to be the victims of treachery.

The abducted maidens were terrified, hopeless, and outraged. Romulus explained it was their parents’ fault that this fate had come upon them, a punishment for denying the right of marriage to their neighbors. Now in Rome, they would enjoy an honorable marriage, have their share of civil rights, and be highly honored as mothers. He begged them to lay aside their feelings of resentment and give their affections to those whom fortune had made their



INTERVENTION OF THE SABINE WOMEN

Hersilia, the wife of Romulus and daughter of Tatius, stands between her husband and father, separating them as they fight. The painting, done in 1799 by French Neoclassical painter David, represents a dramatic moment in the battle to rule Rome.

husbands. Injury, he told them, has often led to reconciliation and love. Besides, they would find their husbands even more affectionate because they would pity their loss of parents and country. As he made these arguments, the men reinforced them by complementing their new wives and speaking tenderly to them, begging forgiveness for their actions on account of their uncontrollable passion.

THE SABINES BRING WAR TO ROME

The parents of the abducted women were overcome with grief and attempted to use their tears to provoke their countrymen to action. When this did not work, they sent formal delegations to Titus Tatius, the king of the Sabines, begging him to take vengeance on the Romans. The king moved too slowly for their liking, so they decided to take the matter into their own hands. Too angry and impatient to wait for the others, they attacked Rome and its surrounding areas on their own.

Romulus came upon them with his army. After a brief encounter, he taught them a hard lesson: anger is useless without strength. Pursuing them with great speed, he took the city of Caenina, where the parents of the captured Sabine women lived, and killed their king. When Romulus returned to Rome, he hung the spoils of war on a sacred oak tree. It was right around this time that he marked out the site for the temple of Jupiter, addressing the god by a new title, and making the following prayer: “**Jupiter Feretrius**, these arms were taken from a king and now I, Romulus—a king and conqueror—bring them to you. In this place, and on these foundations, I dedicate a temple to you which will receive the *spolia opima*, a place where future generations will display the spoils taken from the kings and generals of our enemies killed in battle.” Such was the origin of the first temple dedicated in Rome.

The Romans would end up fighting many more wars over the theft of these women. The last was waged by King Titus Tatius and the Sabines, and it proved

Jupiter Feretrius

Gods in the ancient world were often given various epithets that articulated a certain feature or characteristic. “Feretrius” probably means, “the one who strikes his enemies.”

spolia opima

Considered the most honorable type of war trophies, these were the weapons, armor, or other prized objects taken from an enemy's body after a general won a single combat. Very few instances are recorded of this offering, which translates to “rich spoils” or “spoils of honor.”

Spurius Tarpeius

On the southern side of the Capitoline Hill stands a large rock nearly 100 feet in height. The Romans would execute those found guilty of serious crimes by hurling them off the cliff. This precipice came to be known as Tarpeian Rock, named after the traitorous daughter of Tarpeius.

ROMULUS VICTORIOUS OVER ACRON

King Acron declared war on Rome after the abduction of the Sabine women, but his tribe was ruthlessly defeated by Romulus, shown here carrying the spoils from the vanquished king.



Campus Martius

The “Field of Mars” was originally a plain outside of the Roman walls where soldiers trained. It would later be fully incorporated into the city.

to be the most serious of all. Unlike the prior conflicts, this was not undertaken in anger or impatience. Rather, they masked their plans until the fighting had actually begun. Strategy was aided by craft and deceit, as the following incident shows. **Spurius Tarpeius** was in command of the Roman citadel. While his daughter had gone outside the fortifications to fetch water for some religious ceremonies, King Tatius convinced her to let his troops into the citadel with a bribe. Once admitted, they crushed her to death beneath their shields, so that the fortress might appear to have been taken by assault.

With the capture of the citadel, the Romans were nearly overwhelmed. Only through a prayer, a vow to Jupiter, and the bravery of Romulus, were they able to drive the Sabines back and even the battle. The Sabine women, whose wrongs had led to the war, ran into the battlefield directly between the two armies. Seeing their husbands on one side and their brothers and fathers on the other, they tried to stop the fighting before any more of their loved ones were killed. “Do not,” the women shouted, “bring a curse on future generations by shedding the blood of your own families. If you cannot stand these marriage-bonds, then kill us. It is better that we perish rather than live as widows.”

Both armies were equally moved by this appeal. Silence fell over all as the generals advanced towards each other and arranged the terms of a treaty. Beyond anyone’s expectations, not only was peace declared, but the two nations were united, with royal power shared between them and the seat of government for both nations was now Rome.

THE DEATH OF ROMULUS

These were the principal events at home and in the field that marked the reign of Romulus. Whether we consider the courage he showed in recovering his ancestral throne or the wisdom he displayed in founding the city and adding to its strength through war and peace alike, we find nothing

incompatible with the belief of his divine origin and his admission into divine immortality after death. It was, in fact, through the strength given by him that the city was powerful enough to enjoy peace for forty years after his departure. He was, however, more acceptable to the general population than to the patricians, but most of all, he was the idol of his soldiers.

After these achievements, Romulus held a review of his army in the **Campus Martius**. A violent thunderstorm suddenly began and surrounded the king in such a dense cloud that he could no longer be seen. When the fears of the Roman youth were calmed by the return of bright, calm sunshine after such

fearful weather, they saw that the royal seat was vacant. While they fully believed the claims of the Senators, who had been standing close to him, that Romulus had been snatched away to heaven by a whirlwind, yet like men suddenly bereaved, fear and grief kept them speechless for some time.

The entire population hailed Romulus as “a god, the son of a god, the king and father of the city of Rome.” They prayed to him, requesting grace and asking that he would be favorable to his children, that he would save and protect them. I must add that there is another tradition that he was torn limb from limb by the senators, a story that has filtered down to us.

The tradition about his divinity can be traced back to a man named Proculus Julius. Widely respected among the Roman people, Julius swore under oath that Romulus appeared to him after his death. This was his testimony to the people: “Today, at the break of dawn, the father of this city suddenly descended from heaven and appeared to me. I stood before him in awe, in deepest reverence, praying that I might be pardoned for gazing upon him. “Go,” said he, “tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that Rome should be the head of the entire world. From this day forward, let them cultivate the arts of war and hand down this knowledge to future generations so that no human army can withstand the arms of Rome.” It is marvelous that so much credit was given to this man’s story, that the grief of the people and the army was soothed by believing in the immortality of Romulus.



ROMULUS VICTORIOUS OVER ACRON

King Acron declared war on Rome after the abduction of the Sabine women, but his tribe was ruthlessly defeated by Romulus, shown here carrying the spoils from the vanquished king.

AFTERWORD

In writing about the myth of Rome’s founding, both Virgil and Livy had access to histories that have not survived to modern times or survive only in fragments. One of the most important was the *Annals* of Ennius, an epic poet, written in Latin around two hundred years before the Augustan period. The parts that survive not only show that Ennius knew the same stories that Virgil and Livy read, but also that they had both read Ennius carefully. It is from Ennius, for example, that we learn Remus planned to name his city Remora.

Other early histories of Rome that are mostly lost to us were written in Greek, including one by Fabius Pictor. Fabius was a native Roman, but he

was thoroughly educated in Greek language and literature. He wanted to introduce Greek methods of writing history to the Romans. A few fragments of the lost history by Fabius Pictor have survived, making him the earliest Roman historian that can still be read today. The longest work in Greek about the early history of Rome was written by a man who had read not only Fabius Pictor and Ennius, but also every other work in Greek and Latin on which he could lay his hands. His name was Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and his *Roman Antiquities* is one of our most valuable sources for early Roman history. Let us now turn to his text.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Livy's narrative includes stories of strife between pairs of brothers: first Amulius and Numitor, and then Romulus and Remus. What was the basis for the disagreement between Numitor and Amulius? Romulus and Remus? Why do disagreements between family members seem to result in bloodshed?
2. Livy's narrative also includes stories of strife between Rome and her neighbors, especially the Sabines. Why does Romulus kill his brother Remus over a disagreement about sharing power but consent to share power with the Sabine king Titus Tatius?
3. In the aftermath of the abduction of the Sabine women, what law(s) were broken by the Romans according to the parents of the captured young women? How can Rome be favored by the gods while yet committing acts the gods consider egregious?
4. Compare the role of the Sabine women with the role of Helen played for the Greeks. How did the Sabine women avert total disaster when their families went to war with the Romans?
5. According to Livy's narrative, who or what reveals the destiny of Rome as a great future power in the world? How does this relate to the prophecies of Roman greatness in Virgil?
6. In Livy's history of the founding of Rome, several different accounts of the city's origin are related side by side, without Livy privileging one over another. How, then, do these alternative accounts relate to each other? If one is correct must the others be false? Is it possible that there can be several different ways to account for the same event? What does the pairing of accounts suggest about the Romans conceived of history?
7. According to Livy, do the Romans promote any special stories about themselves? What role do founding myths play in national identity?
8. Does Romulus, in particular, have a special relationship with any god(s)? If so, who? Why? How do the gods in this text generally relate to mortals? Is this different from Virgil's account of divine involvement or a complement to it? Keep in mind that Virgil and Livy sought to write very different kinds of texts.
9. How does Livy's historical account differ from Virgil's poetic account of early Roman history? Is one correct and the other incorrect? Can they both offer something substantive?

3

Rome as a “Greek” City-State

From whom, and for what reason the great name of Rome, so famous among mankind, was given to that city, writers are not agreed.

—Plutarch

INTRODUCTION

The founding of the city of Rome would turn out to be an event of global significance, but it was so obscure at the time that nobody recorded the date. Romans would later agree that the city’s birthday fell on April 21st, but the year of its founding, as well as the actual historical founders, remained unclear. The myths rehearsed by Virgil and Livy depicted a direct lineage from ancient Troy and the gods down to Rome during the reign of the emperor Augustus. They both also emphasized the importance of the twins Romulus and Remus in the city’s founding. However, Romans were well aware that there was a difference between myth and history. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote in our text for this chapter, there is “a great dispute concerning both the time and the building of Rome and who founded it.”

Dionysius set himself the task of identifying the precise date of the city’s founding, reading through

all the works of earlier writers in Greek and Latin. He calculated the year as 751 BC, however, other Roman historians, including Atticus and Varro, who both wrote slightly before Dionysius, preferred the year 753 BC. Regardless of the particular date, Rome’s development as a city in this broad period—the middle of the eighth century BC—is now well supported by archaeological research.¹

Dionysius’s *Roman Antiquities* was a vast, sprawling history in twenty books. We have the first nine of these in complete form, two more mostly complete, and only fragments of the books that cover Roman history after 441 BC. The work was once much longer than Livy’s *History*, full of extended speeches and detailed narrative, providing the richest surviving history of early Rome. The full work traced the history of Rome down to the outbreak of the First Punic War in 264 BC, which is where Polybius, whom we’ll meet in chapter 6, began his

1. Francesca Fulminante, *The Urbanisation of Rome and Latium Vetus: From the Bronze Age to the Archaic Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

history. Dionysius tells us in book 7 of *Roman Antiquities* that the first half of his history, including the story of Rome's origins, was already published in 7 BC. He died sometime after that.

Greek by birth and passionate about all things Greek, Dionysius wrote in Rome, where the principal spoken and written language was Latin. Even so, Dionysius wrote all his works in Greek. This is particularly noteworthy as Dionysius lived and wrote nearly a century after Rome had conquered the Greek world. Part of his goal was to persuade his fellow Greeks of the value of being ruled by Romans. However, the main message of the founding story Dionysius told, that the origins of Rome were wholly Greek, was clearly also aimed at the Romans. We have seen hints of the connection between Greece and Rome in our selections from Virgil and Livy in the figures of Hercules and Evander, but Dionysius went further in his claim. Greek was widely understood in Rome, and all highly educated people could read, write, and speak it fluently. Indeed, Dionysius, who was a professor at Rome, would have taught some of these students himself—in Greek!

In fact, the origins of Rome were not as Greek as Dionysius claimed. Or at least, they were not Greek in the way he claimed. Rome was one of many cities founded around the same time in central and southern Italy. Each of them had its own rulers who controlled a central settlement and the surrounding territory, its lands and people, making them independent city-states. The idea of organizing societies in this way had emerged far earlier and far from both Italy and Greece, in Mesopotamia. However, the idea was brought to Italy by two separate cultures that had spread across the Mediterranean Sea in recent centuries: the Phoenicians and the Greeks. The Phoenicians had founded powerful city-states in the Eastern Mediterranean. In around 800 BC, they founded Carthage on the coast of North Africa in modern Tunisia, which would become Rome's great rival, an enmity Virgil sourced in the spurning of the Carthaginian queen, Dido, by Aeneas on his

journey to Latium. Phoenicians also settled on islands close to the Italian mainland, including Sicily and Sardinia. However, it was the Greeks who established city-states in the coastal lands of southern Italy, a region that would later be called Magna Graecia—"Greater Greece."²

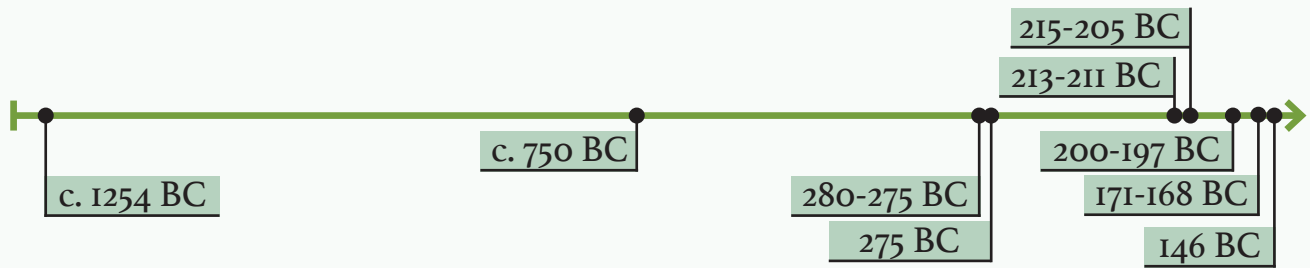
The Ancient Greek word for a self-governing, self-sufficient city-state is *polis* (plural: *poleis*). However, despite the insistence of Dionysius, Rome was not founded by Greeks as a *polis*. Instead, the peoples who were already settled in central Italy before the Romans, including Etruscans in the region known as Etruria immediately to the north of Rome, were inspired by the Greeks. They began to organize themselves in the same way as the *poleis* in Magna Graecia to their south, in order to compete with them for resources and to engage in trade with them. The impetus for this reorganization came from the richest members of Etruscan society, who gained political power alongside greater wealth. Rich Etruscans built grand burial tombs for many generations of the same families. These were filled with grave goods, many of them imported luxury items, acquired through trade with Phoenicians and Greeks. The rulers of these new city-states also spent money on larger public buildings, to display their wealth and power. Etruscan city-states quickly became some of the wealthiest and most powerful in Italy. Rome was the only city in Latium that could compete with them.³ Although the Roman connection to Greece may not have been as direct as Dionysius imagined, Greek culture and government certainly influenced the city as it expanded.

In his *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius presented the history of Rome with a view to attracting the interest of his fellow Greeks in what he saw as their shared history. His love for Rome is palpable in his excitement to link his adopted homeland to his native one. Let's turn our attention to his historical musings on the origins of Rome.

2. Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *Rome: From Village to Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9–12.

3. Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *Rome: From Village to Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9–12.

Timeline



c. 1254 BC — Evander leaves the region of Arcadia on mainland Greece and settles in Italy on what will become the Palatine Hill.

c. 750 BC — The Greeks begin to establish colonies in Italy and Sicily. The southern part of Italy becomes known as Magna Graecia, or “Greater Greece.”

280–275 BC — The Greeks in Italy request aid from King Pyrrhus of Epirus, in Greece.

Pyrrhus enjoys an initial success against the Romans but ultimately suffers devastating losses.

275 BC — The Romans defeat Pyrrhus at the Battle of Beneventum and finish their conquest of Magna Graecia.

215–205 BC — Rome faces King Philip V of Macedon in the First Macedonian War. The war ends in a treaty.

213–211 BC — The Romans besiege Syracuse on Sicily. With their defeat of Syracuse, they gain control over the entire island.

200–197 BC — The Romans again engage in war against Philip V of Macedon in the Second Macedonian War. The Macedonians are forced to leave southern Greece, and the Romans declare the Greeks freed from Macedonian control.

171–168 BC — In the Third Macedonian War, the Romans face Philip V’s son, Perseus. The Romans decisively defeat the Macedonians at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC and their control over Greece grows.

146 BC — The Romans defeat the Greek Achaean Confederacy, resulting in complete Roman control over Greece.

Roman Antiquities

Dionysius of Halicarnassus
c. 7 BC

DIONYSIUS EXPLAINS WHY HE WRITES HISTORY

Although I do not want to indulge in the explanatory statements usually given in the prefaces to histories, I feel as though I must make a few remarks about myself. In doing this, it is neither my intention to praise myself at length, which I know would be distasteful to the reader, nor have I the purpose of criticizing other historians, as others sometimes do in the prefaces to their histories. I will only show the reasons that persuaded me to start this work and

sources

As a conscientious historian, Dionysius cites the sources he uses later in this text.

MUSE OF HISTORY

Appearing with her typical items—the laurel wreath and open book—Clio, Muse of History, calmly considers the viewer. This piece from the Dutch Golden Age shows her at the ready, eager to record..

noble

Livy disagreed; in the preface to his history he claims, “The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history, you have a record . . . for yourself and your country both examples and warnings: fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid.”

our day

Dionysius was writing in the 1st century BC.

Assyrians

An empire in Mesopotamia that ruled from 900–600 BC. It possessed the strongest military and largest empire the world had seen up to that point

Medes

This empire flourished from the seventh century BC to 550 BC in modern-day Iran, before being conquered by Cyrus the Great of Persia. No written texts and limited archaeological evidence from the Medes survive, so all information about them comes from foreign sources.

give an accounting of the **sources** from which I gained the knowledge of the things that I am going to write. For I am convinced that all who wish to leave behind written works which will far outlive them, and particularly those who write histories, should tell nothing but the truth.

Moreover, history writers must choose **noble** subjects to record, because they will be of great use to their readers. They should then, with great care and pain, make sure that they are properly prepared for the treatment of their subject. Notice how many base their historical works upon shameful or evil deeds or those unworthy of serious study, either because they crave recognition or because they desire to display their rhetorical skills. Yet these writers are neither admired by future generations for their fame nor praised for their eloquence. Instead, they leave this opinion in the minds of all who take up their books: that they admired the disgusting lives that they wrote about and published.

There is another kind of history-writer we must take pains to avoid. Those who did choose the best subjects but were careless and lazy in writing their narratives from reports they just happened to hear but did not take the time to verify if they were true. These authors are just as guilty as those who take up vile subjects. In short, we do not deem it fitting, that the histories of renowned cities and of men who have held supreme power should be written in a careless manner. I believe these considerations are necessary and of the first importance and I have taken great care to observe them both.

A SURVEY OF PAST EMPIRES

I have indeed chosen a subject that is noble, superior, and useful to many and I do not think it will require any lengthy argument to demonstrate that this is the case. If anyone looks at the history of cities or nations and wishes to determine which of them obtained the widest dominion and performed the most brilliant achievements both in peace and war, he will find that the Romans far surpassed all who came before; not only in the extent of its territory and in the splendor of its achievements, but also in the length of time during which it has endured down to **our day**.

For the empire of the **Assyrians**, ancient as it was and running back to legendary times, held sway over only a small part of Asia. That of the **Medes**, after overthrowing the Assyrian empire and obtaining a still wider territory, did not hold it long but was overthrown under the rule of the fourth king of the Medes. The Persians, who conquered the Medes, did finally become masters of almost



all Asia, but when they attacked the nations of Europe, they did not have the same success. They lasted for around two hundred **years**. The **Macedonian** power, which overthrew the might of the Persians, did exceed all its predecessors, yet even it did not flourish long. After Alexander's death, it too began to decline. His empire was immediately divided among many commanders from the time of the **Diadochi**, and although they continued for another two or three generations, it was weakened by its own rebellions and finally destroyed by the Romans. Yet at its height, even the Macedonian power did not gain mastery over every country and every sea. It neither conquered Libya (except for the small portion bordering on Egypt) nor subdued all Europe, but advanced only as far as **Thrace** to the north and down to the Adriatic Sea in the west.

So, the most famous empires of which history has given us an account, after attaining such heights, were ultimately overthrown. Some may ask about the Greeks, but they are not worthy of being mentioned in the same class as the ones we just discussed, since they were not as large, nor did they last as long. For example, the Athenians ruled only the seacoast over the course of sixty-eight years and even when their naval supremacy was at its height, it could not conquer more than this. The Spartans, when masters of the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece, advanced their rule as far as Macedonia, but were **checked** by the Thebans before even thirty years had passed.

THE GREATEST EMPIRE IN HUMAN HISTORY

But Rome! She rules every country that is not inaccessible or uninhabited and is mistress of every sea, not only of that which lies inside the **Pillars of Hercules** but also of the Ocean, except that part of it which is not navigable. She is the first and the only state in recorded history that ever made the risings and the settings of the sun the boundaries of her dominion. Her power has not been of short duration either, but more lasting than any other commonwealth or kingdom. From the very beginning, immediately after her founding, she



years

i.e., from c. 550–330 BC

Macedonian

A kingdom north of mainland Greece that rose to power under Philip II (359–336 BC). Through the use of a 15-foot pike known as a sarissa and the phalanx military formation, they subdued all of Greece. Upon Philip's death, his son Alexander the Great rose to power.

Diadochi

Generals of Alexander the Great who divided up and fought over his extensive empire when he died in 323 BC. See HAG2, chapter 45.

Thrace

land north of Greece, along the Black Sea

checked

See HAG2, chapter 38 for Xenophon's account of the fall of Sparta.

Pillars of Hercules

Now known as the Rock of Gibraltar, these large promontories mark the boundary of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. Resembling giant pillars, these rocks were named after Hercules who went west in search of the cattle of Geryon (see HAG1, chapter 5 and HAR1, chapter 2).

ALEXANDER ENTERS BABYLON

Court painter for Louis XIV, Charles Le Brun depicts Alexander triumphantly entering Babylon. Presented as a model for his patron, Le Brun flatters the king by enshrining the young Greek in gold that recalls Louis's epithet, "the sun king." Alexander would enter Babylon again a few years later, sickly and emaciated. His empire fell almost as quickly as it rose.

THE PARTHENON

Dionysius repeatedly claimed Rome was founded by the Greeks. Even so, he argued that Rome exceeded the heights achieved by the Greeks. The slow decay of the Parthenon, romanticized here by Church, throws Roman greatness into sharp relief.

Olympiad

The Greeks measured time in units of four years—referring to that span as an *Olympiad*—the time which intervened between Olympic games. The Romans record years by listing who were the consuls. Nero and Piso were consuls in 7 BC.

Carthaginians

A Phoenician colony in Northern Africa that was Rome's great rival in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (see HARI, chapters 9, 10, and 11).

barbarian

Dionysius, along with other Greeks, referred to peoples who did not speak Greek as "barbarian." The term was onomatopoeic in origin as other languages sounded like babble, unintelligible sounds to the Greeks, "bar-bar-bar."

Punic Wars

A series of three great wars fought between the Romans and the Carthaginians between 264–146 BC (see HARI, chapters 9, 10, and 11).

Fortune

Fortune, or Fortuna, was the Roman goddess of luck, both good and bad. Her cult was one of the oldest, introduced in Rome under the period of the monarchy (8th to 6th centuries BC).



began to draw to herself the neighboring nations, which were both numerous and warlike, and continually advanced, victorious over every rival. Now, 745 years have elapsed from her foundation down to the consulship of Claudius Nero, consul for the second time, and of Calpurnius Piso, who were both chosen in the one hundred and ninety-third *Olympiad*.

From the early days, after she had mastered all of Italy, she was then emboldened to rule all mankind. First, she drove away the *Carthaginians*, whose naval strength excelled all others, defeating them at sea. Then, after subduing Macedonia, the most powerful nation on land, she no longer had any rivals, either *barbarian* or Greek. Now, at the time of this writing, Rome has continued to hold sway over every region of the world for seven generations and there is no nation in the world that disputes her universal authority or even protests against being ruled by her.

But before I proceed, I desire to show that I have well-considered reasons to look at the early part of Rome's history. Even though this city has grown so famous in our day, it had very humble and inglorious beginnings, unworthy of historical record. It was only but a few generations ago, since her overthrow of the Macedonian powers and her success in the *Punic Wars*, that she arrived at such distinction and glory. Nevertheless, when I was at liberty to choose one of the famous periods in her history for my theme, I turned to the unknown story of her foundation.

To this day, almost all the Greeks are ignorant of the early history of Rome and the great majority of them have been told lies: that, having come upon various nomads without house or home and having barbarians as her founders, she, in the course of time, arrived at world domination. According to this tale, Rome was not brought about through reverence for the gods and justice and every other virtue, but through chance and the injustice of *Fortune*, which inconsiderately showers her greatest favors upon the most undeserving. Indeed, stories like this cause malicious people to openly criticize Fortune for freely bestowing on the vilest barbarians, the blessings of the Greeks. Yet why should

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Go West, Young Greek

Like many other Greeks after the Romans conquered their lands, Dionysius of Halicarnassus moved to Rome. Although he was born on the western coast of Asia Minor, he relocated around 30 BC, the year after Octavian restored peace to the Roman Empire by defeating Marcus Antonius, or Mark Antony. In the Eternal City, the young man studied Latin, taught rhetoric to Romans, and began to compile material for his history. Because *philhellenism*, the love of Greek culture, was popular among Roman elites, they were eager to learn the Greek language and to study its great works of literature. Dionysius thus found an eager market for his lessons in rhetoric. He fully immersed himself in his new culture and spent the rest of his life in Rome.



◆ Evander

According to Greek tradition, Evander was either a hero or a minor deity. He emigrated from Arcadia in Greece to Italy, settling near the Palatine Hill on the future site of Rome. Livy writes that the hill was named after the town of Pallantium in Arcadia. Evander was known for introducing the festival of Lupercal to Italy, based on an Arcadian festival in honor of Lycaean Pan—*lykos* is Greek for wolf, *lupa* is the Latin. Tradition also said that Evander brought the Greek alphabet to Rome. Some ancient authors suggest that the similarities between Latin and Greek date back to Evander's introduction of the Aeolic Greek dialect, which developed into Latin. Most legends say it was Evander who brought Hercules into the region of Rome as well. Evander would come to be seen as symbolizing the impact of Greek culture on early Rome, whether or not he did everything ascribed to him.



◆ Advocate for Virtue

Much like his Roman contemporary, Livy, Dionysius emphasized the importance of virtue in understanding history. He criticized those who did not carefully research to discover truth before they wrote about events, setting a high standard for research and accuracy in assessing the work of his predecessors. He also praised early Roman leaders for their virtues, which he believed enabled them to achieve great success for Rome. Dionysius also adapted Roman legends about prehistory that he learned from Roman sources; these allowed him to teach virtues such as honesty, piety, and perseverance through the lives of early legendary heroes.



subjection

By 146 BC, the Romans had completely conquered the Greek city-states.

epitomes

short summaries of longer works—like the modern “abstract,” which provides a short summary of an academic article.

Hieronymus

A Greek general, historian, and contemporary of Alexander the Great. Though his works are all lost, he was an important primary source for subsequent historians as he chronicled the period between the death of Alexander and the Pyrrhic War (323–272 BC).

Timaeus

A Greek historian who spent substantial time in both Sicily and Athens. He wrote a history of Greece from its beginnings through the first Punic War, including portions on Sicily and Italy, and introduced the system of establishing chronology by Olympiads.

Pyrrhus

King of the important Greek kingdom of Epirus, Pyrrhus was the most formidable opponent of early Rome. Hannibal referred to him as the “greatest general in the history of the world” (see HARI, chapter 10).

other authors

Of the three historians mentioned, only the work of Polybius has survived to modern times. See HAG2, chapter 46; HARI, chapters 6 and 9.

PYRRHUS OF EPIRUS

The Greek king Pyrrhus of Epirus was a phenomenal general who fought the Romans after the death of Alexander. He defeated the Romans at the Battle of Asculum in 279 BC but suffered significant casualties. Plutarch reports him as saying that another such victory would undo him.

I criticize the common man, when even some historians have dared to express such views, taking this method of flattering barbarian kings who detested Rome’s supremacy by presenting them with “histories” that were neither just nor true?

DIONYSIUS CLAIMS THE GREEKS FOUNDED ROME

Therefore, to remove this false narrative, I will demonstrate who the founders of the city were, at what periods the various groups came together, and through what turns of fortune they left their native countries. In this way I plan to prove that they were Greeks and came together from nations not the smallest nor least considerable. I will tell of the deeds they performed immediately after their founding of the city and of the customs and institutions through which their descendants advanced to so great a dominion. So far as I am able, I will omit nothing worthy of being recorded in history, so that I may teach those reading about the founding of this city.

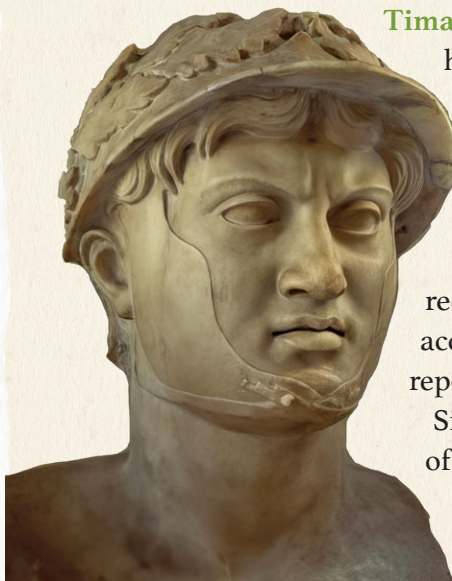
I also hope that they may neither feel resentment at their present **subjection**, which is grounded on reason (for by a universal law of Nature it is ordained that superiors will ever govern their inferiors) nor complain about bestowing upon an undeserving city a supremacy so great and already of so long continuance. This will be particularly true when they will have learned from my history that Rome, from the very beginning, produced infinite examples of virtue in men—whether for piety, justice, self-control, or warlike courage—that no other city, whether Greek or barbarian, has ever produced. This, I say, is what I hope to accomplish, if my readers will but lay aside all resentment. It is a fact that all those Romans who gave their country so great a power are unknown to the Greeks. For no accurate history of the Romans written in the Greek language has previously appeared, but only very brief **epitomes**.

PREVIOUS GREEK HISTORIANS ON ROME

The first historian, so far as I am aware, to touch upon the early period of the Romans was **Hieronymus** of Cardia. After him

Timaeus of Sicily related the beginnings of their history in his general volume and treated the wars with **Pyrrhus** of Epirus in a separate work. Besides these, Antigonos, Polybius, Silenus and innumerable **other authors** devoted themselves to the same themes, though in different ways, each of them recording some few things compiled without accurate investigation on his own part but from reports which he happened to hear.

Similar to these in all respects are the histories of those Romans who wrote in Greek about the early achievements of the city; the oldest of these **writers** are Quintus Fabius and Lucius



Cincius, who both flourished during the Punic wars. Each of these men related the events at which he himself had been present with great exactness, as being well acquainted with them, but touched briefly on the early events that followed the founding of the city. Therefore, for these reasons, I have determined to address this noble period of Roman history, which the older writers left untouched, a period which will hopefully inspire virtue and courage in the reader.

Studying these brave men who fulfilled their destiny and gained immortal glory will encourage present and future descendants of these heroes to choose



not an easy life but rather a noble and ambitious one. When Romans consider their celebrated origin, it will inspire them to embark on pursuits worthy of their ancestors. I, who have not undertaken this work for the sake of fame, but out of a regard for truth and justice, which ought to be the aim of every history, only hope to provide good men with material to contemplate the great and noble deeds of those who have gone before. This is the least I can do to express my gratitude to this city for all the blessings I have enjoyed while I have lived here.

Having given the reason for my choice of subject, I wish now to say something concerning the sources I used while preparing my history. For it is possible that those who have already read Hieronymus, Timaeus, Polybius, or any of the other historians whom I just now mentioned, since they will **not find** in those authors many things mentioned by me, will suspect me of inventing them and will demand to know how I came upon these facts. So that no one should entertain such an opinion of me, it is best that I should state in advance what narratives and records I have used as sources.

I arrived in Italy at the very time that **Augustus Caesar** put an end to the civil war, and for a period of twenty-two years, I lived in Rome, learned the

writers

Quintus Fabius (d. 200 BC) was the earliest known Roman historian. His seminal work *Annales Graeci* (now lost) was a foundational source for subsequent historians. **Lucius Cincius** lived in the same period and his important volume *Annals* (also lost) is where other early, Latin writers obtained information about Rome.

TROJAN WOMEN BURN THE FLEET

Famed landscape painter **Claude Lorrain** juxtaposes classical myth with the historical present in this landscape painting. Seventeenth century ships become the Trojan vessels set on fire by Trojan women grown weary of searching for the promised Latin lands.

not find

Dionysius did not use the Greek historians he listed but sources unknown to the Greeks that he discovered when living in Rome.

Augustus Caesar

The first emperor of Rome; when his adopted father, **Julius Caesar**, was assassinated, Rome fell into a period of civil war, first between Augustus and Caesar's assassins, then against Augustus's former ally **Antony**. His victory at the **Battle of Actium** in 31 BC ended the civil wars.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



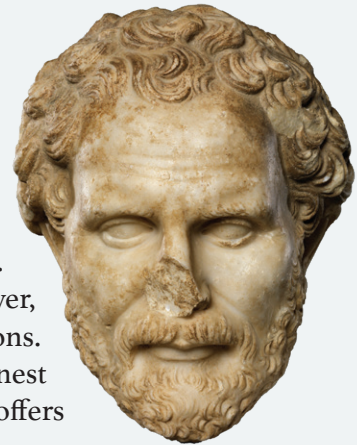
◆ Founding of Carthage

Carthage, meaning “new town” in Phoenician, was a colony of the great Phoenician city of Tyre. Ancient sources say it was founded c. 814 BC, but archaeological evidence suggests that the city was established in the middle of the following century—the same era in which Rome was founded. The site was chosen because of its protected natural harbor and highly fertile interior land. Legend says that the founder of Carthage, Dido, outwitted a local chieftain named Iarbas. He agreed to sell her as much land as an oxhide would cover, in return for a huge pile of gold. The queen cut

the oxhide into very thin strips and enclosed a much larger area than the disappointed Iarbas had anticipated. Carthage began as a trading outpost, and trade remained its lifeblood throughout its existence. Dominating the western Mediterranean for centuries, Carthage eventually became Rome’s deadliest rival.

◆ Literary Critic

Modern scholars tend not to emphasize the literary style of Dionysius’s *Roman Antiquities*, though they value his care in preserving material from older historians. However, Dionysius did shape the history of literary style through his study of great Attic orators, including Lysias, Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Thucydides. His work emphasizes the simplicity and “purity” of these orators, as opposed to the cleverness and novelties of later speakers. He praised the style of Lysias, who wrote mostly courtroom speeches. However, Dionysius criticized Lysias’s failure to incorporate effective appeals to emotions. Dionysius’s analysis of the oratory of earlier men is considered some of his finest writing today, both for the quality of his own prose and for the insights he offers about rhetorical style.



◆ Syracuse Established

Within a generation of the founding of Rome, the Greek city of Corinth planted a colony on the southeastern tip of Sicily. Around 734 BC a group of Greek settlers led by Archias landed on the island of Ortygia just across a narrow channel from the future site of Syracuse. The colony soon spread across to the Sicilian mainland. Syracuse was long ruled by tyrants, many of whom were successful generals who spread the power of the state to neighboring communities. Syracuse also became a center of wealth and Greek culture. In the fifth century, famous Greeks including Aeschylus, the poet Pindar, and Plato all visited Syracuse as guests of the ruling tyrants.



language of the Romans, and acquainted myself with their writings. Throughout this time, I have devoted myself to studying the origins of this empire. Some information I received orally from men of the greatest learning—men whom I personally knew—and the rest I collected from histories written by the **approved** Roman authors: Porcius Cato, Fabius Maximus, Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer, the Aelii, Gellii and Calpurnii, and many others of note. With these works in hand, which are very like the Greek **annalistic** accounts, I set about writing my history. So much, then, concerning myself. But it yet remains for me to say something also concerning the history itself—to what periods I limit it, what subjects I describe, and what form I give to the work.

I begin my history with the most ancient legends, which the historians before me have omitted as a subject too difficult to clear up, even with diligent study. I bring the narrative down to the beginning of the First Punic War. I relate all the foreign wars that the city waged during that period and all the internal **seditions**, showing from what causes they sprang and by what methods and by what arguments they were ended. I give an account also of all the forms of government Rome used, both during the monarchy and after its overthrow, and show what the character of each was. I will describe the best customs and the most remarkable laws. In short, I will show the whole life of the ancient Romans. As to the form I give this work, it does not make wars alone the subject, nor does it focus on the several forms of government adopted, nor is it like the annalistic accounts—for these are monotonous and soon grow tedious to the reader—but it is a combination of every kind—forensic, speculative and narrative—to the intent that it may afford satisfaction both to those who occupy themselves with political debates and to those who are devoted to philosophical speculations, as well as to any who may desire to be entertained in their reading of history. Such things, therefore, will be the subjects of my history and such will be its form. I, the author, am Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the son of Alexander.

GREEK SOURCES THAT CLAIM ROME WAS FOUNDED BY GREECE

Since there is such a great dispute concerning both the time and the building of Rome and who founded it, I thought it necessary to give a careful account, since the facts are not agreed upon. For example, Cephalaon of Gergis, a very ancient writer, says that the city was built in the second generation after the Trojan war by those who had escaped from Troy with **Aeneas**, and he names **Romus** as the founder, who was the leader of the colony and one of Aeneas's sons. Demagoras, Agathyllus, and many others agree with him as regards both the time and the leader of the colony.

Another author who wrote a history about the priestesses at Argos asserts that Aeneas came into Italy from the land of the **Molossians** with Odysseus and became the founder of the city, which he named after Romê, one of the Trojan women. He says that this woman, growing weary with wandering, stirred up the other Trojan women and they set **fire** to the ships. Other writers agree with this account as well.

approved

Origines by Porcius Cato, known as Cato the Elder (see HAR1, chapter 11), and works by the other Roman historians Dionysius mentions no longer exist, but survive as references and quotations in other works.

annalistic

recording historical events year by year

seditions

actions or speech that encourage groups to rebel

Aeneas

A Trojan hero who escaped the fall of Troy to go on and found a new city in Italy. His lineage is said to have established the city of Rome (see HAR1, chapter 1).

Romus

A name invented by the Greeks for the founder of Rome before they heard the story of Romulus and Remus (see HAR1, chapter 2).

Molossians

a tribe originally from the Greek kingdom of Epirus; King Pyrrhus was a Molossian

fire

A similar version of this story is recorded in Virgil's Aeneid, book 5.

Opicans

a tribe of people living in the region around Rome called Latinium, or “the Latin land”

Agathocles

A Sicilian Greek who overthrew the government in Syracuse, banishing or killing 10,000 people to establish himself as tyrant. After, he renewed fighting with the Carthaginians, ultimately restricting their power to the western half of Sicily.

Latinus

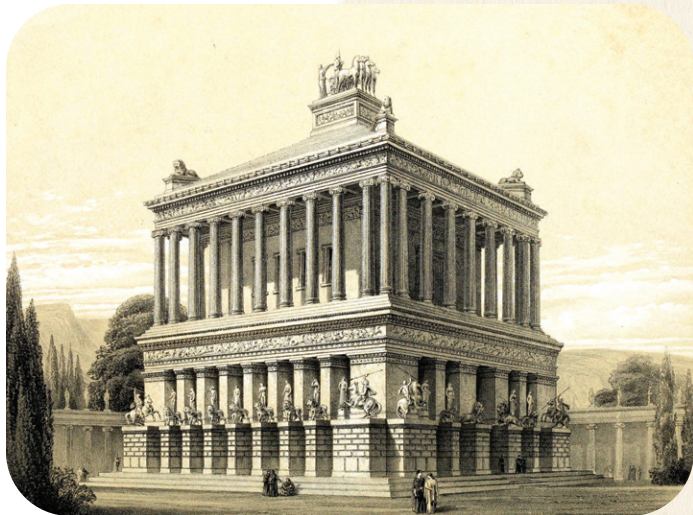
A legendary king of Latium; Aeneas married his daughter Lavinia (see HARI, chapter 1). Latinus ruled over the Latins, the aboriginal peoples of the land, who Dionysius will claim were originally Greeks.

Circe

A witch and minor goddess visited by Odysseus as he journeyed home after the Trojan War. She turned Odysseus’s crew into animals and detained them for over a year on her island (see the Odyssey, book 10).

MAUSOLEUM AT HALICARNASSUS

This engraving shows the southeast view of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. This Wonder of the Ancient World was built around 353 BC and attested to the greatness of the Greeks, who constructed the mausoleum under the direction of the Persians. Dionysius would have been well familiar with this monument from his hometown.



Aristotle the philosopher also agrees with the Greek origins of Rome, only he says that they were overtaken by a violent storm when returning from Troy and were driven by the winds over many parts of the sea until at last they came to this place in the land of the **Opicans** which is called Latinium, lying on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Pleased with the sight of land, they hauled up their ships, stayed there the winter season and were preparing to sail at the beginning of spring, but when their ships were set on fire in the night and they were unable to sail away, they were compelled, against their will, to make this land their new home. He asserts a similar story about the captive women they were carrying with them from Troy. They burned the boats, not because they were weary of wandering, but rather because they thought the Greeks would sell them into slavery, once they arrived back home.

Callias, who wrote of the deeds of **Agathocles**, says that one of the Trojan women named Romê, who came into Italy with the other Trojans, married **Latinus**, the king of the Aborigines, by whom she had three sons, Romus, Romulus and Telegonus. The sons went on to build a city and named it after their mother.

The historian Xenagoras writes that Odysseus and **Circe** had three sons, Romus, Anteias and Ardeias, who built three cities and called them after their own names. Dionysius of Chalcis names records Romus as the founder of the city but says that according to some, this man was the son of Ascanius, and according to others the son of Emathion. There are others who declare that Rome was built by Romus, the son of Italus and Leucaria, the daughter of Latinus.

ROMAN SOURCES THAT CLAIM ROME WAS FOUNDED BY GREECE

I could cite many other Greek historians who assign different founders to the city, but I must now come to the Roman historians. The Romans, to be sure, do not have one single chronicler who is **ancient**. Rather, their writers have taken something from the ancient accounts or that which are preserved on **sacred tablets**. Some of these say that Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were the sons of Aeneas. Others say that the twins were the sons of

Aeneas’s daughter without mentioning who the father was. Different accounts claim that Romulus and his brother were delivered as hostages by Aeneas to Latinus, the king of the Aborigines, when the treaty was made between the inhabitants and the newcomers. When the king died without a male heir, he left part of his kingdom to the twins.

Others say that after the death of Aeneas, his son Ascanius inherited all of the Latin people. He then divided their country and their forces into three parts, two of which he gave to his brothers, Romulus and Remus, respectively. He himself



MONUMENTS OF ANCIENT ROME

Highly idealized, Giovanni Paolo Panini here assembles various monuments from across Rome. Set before the Pantheon are the Farnese Hercules and an Egyptian obelisk to the left and Trajan's column on the far right. The famous equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius draws the viewers' eye to the center.

built Alba and some smaller towns. Remus built cities that he named Capuas after his great-grandfather, Anchisa after his grandfather, and Aeneia (afterwards called Janiculum) after his father. Romulus built Rome after himself. This last city was deserted for some time, but upon the arrival of another colony, which the Albans sent out under the leadership of Romulus and Remus, it received again its ancient name.

According to this account, there were two settlements of Rome, one a little after the Trojan war, and the other fifteen generations after the first. If anyone desires to investigate the very-distant past, a third Rome can even be discovered, more ancient than these, one that was founded before Aeneas and the Trojans even came into Italy. This is related by no ordinary historian, but by Antiochus of Syracuse. He says that when **Morges** reigned in Italy, a man came to him who had been banished from Rome. His words are these: "When **Italus** was growing old, Morges reigned. In his reign there came a man who had been banished from Rome; his name was Seicelus." Therefore, according to the Syracusan historian, there was a very ancient Rome established before the Trojan War. However, as he has left it doubtful whether it was situated in the same region where the present city stands or whether some other place happened to be called by this name, I do not know.

ROME IS A GREEK CITY

Such, then, are the facts concerning the origin of the Romans which I have been able to discover reading many works written by both Greek and Roman authors. Thus, from now on let the reader renounce the view that claims that Rome was a retreat of barbarians, fugitives, and nomads. Rather, let him confidently affirm it to be a Greek city.

Then he will understand why this is the most hospitable and friendly of all cities when he bears in mind that the Aborigines were Oenotrians, who were

sacred tablets

The *pontifex maximus* (the chief high priest of Rome) kept annual records of public events that were posted publicly every year and written down in book form.

ancient

Rome's earliest historians, like Quintus Fabius, wrote much later than the foundation of Rome. If there were any older sources, they did not exist when Dionysius wrote his history.

Morges

an early Italic king

Italus

Legendary king of southern Italy; both Aristotle (book 7 of *Politics*) and the Greek historian Thucydides (*Peloponnesian War* 6.2.4) claimed that Italy was named for Italus.

Pelasgians

A term used to describe the earliest inhabitants of Greece; Dionysius claims they were Argives, another name for the Greeks.

Evander

A Greek king of Arcadia who settled on the Palatine Hill before the Trojan War; he brought Greek religion, laws, and alphabet to Italy. Aeneas made an alliance with him when he arrived in Italy (see the Aeneid, book 8)

Troad

a region around the city of Troy

Aeolic

thought to be a Latin dialect of Greek

colonists

City-states of Greece established many colonies in Italy, which retained some elements of their mother-city.

originally from the Greek region of Arcadia, and remembers those who joined with them in their settlement, the **Pelasgians** who were Argives by descent and came into Italy from Thessaly. Furthermore, if he recalls the arrival of **Evander** and the Arcadians, who settled round the Palatine Hill, after the Aborigines had granted the place to them and also the Peloponnesians, who accompanied Hercules during his trip west and settled upon the Saturnian Hill. Finally, if he remembers those who left the **Troad** and were intermixed with the earlier settlers, for one will find no nation that is more ancient or more Greek than these.

It may be a cause of wonder to many who reflect on the expansion of Rome that it did not become entirely barbarized after absorbing into its empire the various tribes—Opicans, the Marsians, the Samnites, the Tyrrhenians, the Bruttians and many thousands of Umbrians, Ligurians, Iberians, and Gauls, besides innumerable other nations, some of whom came from Italy itself and some from other regions. Each differed from one another both in their language and habits. Their diverse ways of life might have been expected to cause many innovations in the ancient order of the city. For many others, by living among barbarians, have in a short time forgotten all their Greek heritage, so that they neither speak the Greek language nor observe the customs of the Greeks nor acknowledge the same gods nor have the same equitable laws.

The language spoken by the Romans is neither utterly barbarous nor absolutely Greek, but a mixture, as it were, of both, the greater part of which is **Aeolic**. The only disadvantage they have experienced from their intermingling with these various nations is that they do not pronounce all their sounds properly. But all other indications of a Greek origin they preserve beyond any other **colonists**. For it is not merely recently, since they have enjoyed the full tide of good fortune to instruct them in the conveniences of life, that they have begun to live humanely, nor is it merely since they first aimed at the conquest of countries lying beyond the sea, after overthrowing the Carthaginian and Macedonian empires, but rather from the time when they first joined in founding the city, that they have lived like Greeks.

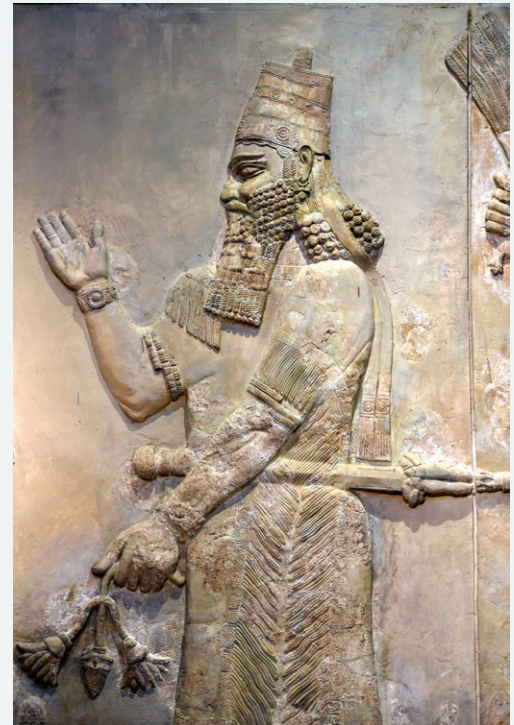
HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Atticist

Among Greek rhetoricians, a serious debate occurred in the first century BC. Greek orators of the Hellenistic era from Dionysius's native Asia Minor had developed a style that featured puns and various plays on words, intense appeal to emotions, complicated sentences with piled-up clauses, and exaggerated language. Dionysius and other rhetoricians criticized this newer style, commending the older "Attic" oratory that was more restrained and relied on conventional word choices. The debate between "Asians" and "Atticists" even affected Roman rhetoric. Cicero was sharply criticized as an "Asian" because of his elaborate style of speaking. In the first century AD, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian praised the simpler style of men like Dionysius and turned Roman rhetoric away from the Ciceronian form that had dominated Roman oratory for over a century.

◆ End of Israel

At various times, the Assyrian kingdom had deported rebellious populations from their homelands to distant regions, terrorizing their subjects and preventing further resistance. Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BC) made this a standard policy within the Assyrian empire. In 732 BC, Pekah, king of Israel, joined an alliance against Assyria. This confederation was crushed by Tiglath-Pileser, who deported thousands of people from northern and eastern Israel. The final end of the northern kingdom of Israel occurred in 721 BC. King Hoshea of Israel withheld tribute from Tiglath-Pileser's successor in 723, and the Assyrians marched into Israel. The then-capital of Israel, Samaria, held out for two years, but finally fell to the invaders. The king of Assyria, Sargon II, recorded that he deported 27,290 people from Israel and resettled those who survived the brutal march in Mesopotamia. He repopulated Israel with non-Jews, effectively ending the existence of the kingdom of Israel north of Jerusalem. The people deported by the Assyrians are commonly known as the "Ten Lost Tribes" because they lost their identity as Jews and became assimilated into local populations.



AFTERWORD

Dionysius collected and commented upon the various myths and stories of how, why, and by whom the city of Rome had been founded. He was familiar with the stories that Virgil and Livy told and had read all their sources. He weighed the accounts of others and gave his own verdict. His principal message is clearly stated: Rome was a "Greek city." The foundation myth of Rome, which saw Romulus and Remus as descendants of the

noble Trojan Aeneas, linked the city to a glorious Greek past. It also linked Rome from its origins to the stories set out in the foundational works of classical Greek literature, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁴

Romans actually loved the idea that Greeks had founded Rome. They had long respected Greek culture, and at the time Dionysius wrote, the Roman empire included all the Greek city-states across Greece, Magna Graecia, and Asia Minor. Greek

4. H. Hill, "Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the origins of Rome," *Journal of Roman Studies* 51 (1961), 88–93.

culture was embraced as Roman culture. So much so, in fact, that the Augustan poet Horace quipped, “Captive Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought the arts to rustic Latium.” Roman artists copied Greek sculpture and adapted Greek architecture. The Greek model of education was adopted by the Roman elites, so that all wealthy young men, and some women, received formal training in rhetoric and philosophy. It did not matter so much, then, that the story of the Greek foundation of Rome was untrue!

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. What does Dionysius claim as his motive for writing about himself in his introduction? He claims he does not wish to “indulge in the explanatory statements usually given” in histories before going on to do precisely that. How does he position himself with regards to other historians?
2. What is history according to Dionysius? What is its purpose? How does this compare with other Greek historians you have encountered such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, and Xenophon?
3. How does Dionysius characterize Rome in contrast with previous empires, such as the Assyrian Empire or Alexander’s empire? What accounts for the difference(s)?
4. How does Dionysius’s version of the founding story of Romulus and Remus differ from what we have seen in Virgil on the Shield of Aeneas and from Livy’s account? How does the significance of the story change from author to author?
5. What role do the gods play in Dionysius’s history? Does Dionysius’s account maintain a different view of the gods than we have seen so far?
6. Keeping in mind that Dionysius claims Greece played an integral role in the founding of Rome, how does he conceive of and portray the Greeks? Does this agree with or deviate from how previous Greek historians portrayed themselves?
7. Does Dionysius seem to portray himself more as a Greek or as a Roman? How does his argument about the founding of Rome seem to affect his notion of national identity?
8. What implications would Dionysius’s claim that Rome was Greek have for his Greek readers; for his Roman readers? Remember that he writes after Rome had conquered the Greek world.
9. How does Dionysius delineate between history proper and myths and legends? Does he seem to follow Livy and Virgil in this regard or deviate from their approach?