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LIVY

The Early History of Rome

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ROME

TITUS LIVIUS was born in 59 BC at Patavium (Padua) but later moved to Rome. He lived in an eventful age but little is known about his life, which seems to have been occupied exclusively in literary work. When he was aged about thirty he began to write his *History of Rome*, consisting of 142 books of which thirty-five survive. He continued working on it for over forty years until his death in AD 17.

AUBREY DE SÉLINCOURT, scholar and translator, translated Livy's *The Early History of Rome* (Books I–V) and *The War with Hannibal* (Books XXI–XXX), *The Histories of Herodotus* and *The Campaigns of Alexander* by Arrian, all for Penguin Classics. He was born in 1896 and educated at the Dragon School, Oxford, at Rugby, and at University College, Oxford. A schoolmaster of genius for twenty-six years, he retired in 1947 to the Isle of Wight where he lived until his death in 1962.

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LIVY

*The Early History
of Rome*

Books I-V of
The History of Rome from Its Foundations

Translated by
AUBREY DE SÉLINCOURT

With an Introduction by
R. M. OGILVIE

and a Preface and Additional Material by
S. P. OAKLEY

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CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE	vii
INTRODUCTION	I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ROME

BOOK ONE <i>Rome under the Kings</i>	27
BOOK TWO <i>The Beginnings of the Republic</i>	105
BOOK THREE <i>The Patricians at Bay</i>	191
BOOK FOUR <i>War and Politics</i>	285
BOOK FIVE <i>The Capture of Rome</i>	365

MAPS

<i>Latium</i>	438
<i>Rome</i>	440
APPENDIX	441
INDEX	469

For books 2 to 5, dates have been added to the text at the top of each page; these follow the conventional 'Varronian' chronology adopted by modern scholars. For book 1, in which Livy's material is not dated, the reign of the appropriate king is recorded at the head of the page.

References in the Introduction, Appendix and at page-heads are to the Latin text of Livy.

PREFATORY NOTE

Aubrey de Sélincourt published his translation of these books of Livy without a full scholarly introduction. This lack was made good in 1971, when Penguin Books commissioned a new essay from Robert Ogilvie to replace de Sélincourt's own introduction. Ogilvie's finest scholarly achievement was his *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5*, published by the Clarendon Press in 1965. This commentary immediately established his reputation as one of the great Livian scholars and still remains a work of reference fundamental for anyone interested in the first five books of Livy and in the earliest history of Rome. Ogilvie was therefore better qualified than anyone else to introduce a translation of these books and he provided an essay that is informed, succinct and lucid. Since most of what he wrote remains true today, his essay has been reprinted intact. Another reason for preserving it is that it is the only general introduction to these books of Livy that he wrote.

However, Ogilvie provided no general bibliography, and the progress of classical scholarship since 1971 makes it likely that he would now say some things rather differently. Accordingly, the main purpose of the appendix at the end of this volume is to supplement Ogilvie's introduction by (i) evaluating the more important bibliography on the subjects which Ogilvie discussed, (ii) suggesting modifications to some of Ogilvie's opinions, and (iii) writing at greater length about some subjects upon which Ogilvie touched only briefly.

S. P. Oakley

INTRODUCTION

LIVY

Livy (Titus Livius) was born at Padua in northern Italy in 59 BC, or possibly 64 BC.¹ We know little about his family background, except that Padua, a city famous for its moral rectitude, had suffered severely in the Civil Wars. Livy himself may have been prevented from going to the university in Greece, as most educated young Romans did, but he made a study of philosophy (according to the elder Seneca,² he wrote philosophical dialogues) and other traditional subjects. Nor does he seem to have aimed at a public career either at the bar or in politics; we have no record of his holding any office or engaging in public activity. Instead he devoted the course of a long life to writing his *History of Rome* which comprised 142 Books (35 are still extant) from the foundation of Rome down to 9 BC. Most of his life was passed at Rome. His reputation brought him into contact with Augustus but there is little evidence of intimacy between the two men, except that about AD 8 he helped the young Claudius (the future Emperor) with his literary efforts.³ Augustus, indeed, disapproved of Livy's outspoken treatment of the recent past (Tacitus says that he called him a Pompeian)⁴ and a note in the summary of Book 121 states that that book (and presumably the remaining books which dealt with Augustus's principate) were not published until after the emperor's death in AD 14, for fear, we may assume, that they might give offence. Thus, although in touch with the seat of power, Livy retained an uninvolved independence. He was criticized by a contemporary, Pollio, for his 'Paduaness' (Patavinitas) — a provincial manner of

¹ Jesome/Eusebius, *Chron. ad Ann. Abr.* 1958.

² *Controversiae* X Praef. 2.

³ Suetonius, *Claudius* XLI. 1.

⁴ *Annals* IV. 34.

speech.⁵ It is notable that he is not referred to by any contemporary writer. He died at Padua, not Rome, in AD 17.

The first five books, which deal with the period from the foundation of Rome to the Gallic occupation in 386 BC, were conceived and published as a whole. They have a unity of design and construction, with the Commission of Ten at the centre and Camillus' great speech, echoing the foundation of the city, at the end. The Preface is a preface to these five books and not to the complete work nor to the first book alone. Internal references, such as the closing of the Temple of Janus (I.19.3), suggest that Livy began his task in 29 BC and finished the five books by 27 BC, but the version which we have is almost certainly a revised edition published in or after 24 BC, because the excursus on Cossus (IV.20.5-11) with the reference to 'sacrilege' is an awkward addition which contradicts the narrative, and can only have been composed after Augustus had adopted the title of *Divi filius* 'son of god'. 29 BC is a plausible starting date. The Battle of Actium in 31 BC had brought an end to the Civil Wars. However uncertain the future might be, some security and stability had been restored to the world, which might encourage a historian to take stock of the situation. It is no accident that the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who was to cover in his *History* the same ground as Livy, arrived in Rome in 30 BC.

Livy, therefore, differed from the great majority of his predecessors in that he was not a public man: he did not turn to history as a recreation. For him it was life. We would not expect to find in him the crude political interpretations of history, discussed in the following section, which characterized the approach of earlier writers. Yet it would be a mistake to think of Livy's history as unconcerned with the problems of his generation. The difference between Livy and the others is that his philosophical detachment enabled him to see history in terms of human characters and representative individuals rather than of partisan politics. Livy accepted a tradition going back to Aristotle (especially in the *Rhetoric*) and to Thucydides which explained historical events by the characters of the persons involved.

⁵ Quintilian I. 5.56.

As Aristotle said, 'actions are signs of character'.⁶ Because people are the sort of people that they are, they do the sort of things that they do, and the job of the historian is to relate what happens to the appropriate character. Equally, however, it follows that if similar characters occur in 500 BC and 20 BC their possessors will tend to act in a similar way, so that one can infer from what a man of a certain character did in 20 BC what a similar character must have done in 500 BC. Human nature, Thucydides argued, is constant and hence predictable.⁷ This philosophy helps to account for the readiness with which historians transferred events from the recent to the remote past (see below, p. 9) but Livy used it as the framework of his history. Instead of a barren list of unconnected events Livy constructs a series of moral episodes which are designed to bring out the character of the leading figures. Tullus Hostilius (I.22-31) is fierce (*ferox*) and the events of his reign are tailored to display that ferocity. In the same way Livy moulds the story of the Commission of Ten round the lust of Appius Claudius and the chastity of Verginia (III. 36ff.) or the stories of Veii and the Gauls round the piety of M. Furius Camillus. The last Tarquin was Proud and pride is the hall-mark of his reign.

This technique had a further advantage besides giving unity and shape to the narrative. It helped Livy to bring the tale alive. The climax of almost every moral episode is a short speech or dialogue uttered by the principal characters. It was a device used, for example, by Horace in his *Odes* to highlight the key moment of the story. But ancient literary criticism insisted that where an author composed a speech either in history or in oratory it should fit the character of the speaker. Thucydides was often criticized for the sameness of his speeches.⁸ To achieve the right effect Livy deployed the whole range of the Latin language but the subtlety of his tones is inevitably lost in any translation, however good. Sometimes he sets out to recreate the great rhetorical effects of the orators of his youth, such as Cicero or Hortensius. When we read the speech of T. Quinctius (III.67-68), C. Canuleius (IV.3-5), Ap. Claudius (V.3-6) or Camillus (V.51-54)

⁶ *Rhetoric* 1367b. ⁷ I.22.4.

⁸ e.g. by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *ad Pompeium* 3.20.

we can hear the thundering periods, the political clichés, the emotive vocabulary of the late Republic. For those men were statesmen and that is how statesmen speak. On other occasions he flavours brief utterances with colloquial, archaic or poetical language as the situation demands. The coarse impetuosity of Turnus Herdonius is caught in a single vulgar exclamation (I.50.9); Coriolanus's mother addresses him in tragic language with tragic thoughts (II.40.5). C. Laetorius speaks as a crude, blunt soldier (II.56.9). Horatius Cocles jumps into the Tiber with a thoroughly epic prayer (II.10.11). The list could be multiplied indefinitely and it is important to remember, while reading a translation, that to a Roman's ears each of Livy's characters would have sounded real because he was made to speak in a distinctive and fitting way.

Livy made history comprehensible by reducing it to familiar and recognizable characters, but the process was one which could not be divorced from his attitude to his own times and his vision of the future. In the Preface he asserts that the present state of Rome was the direct consequence of the failure in moral character of the Roman. 'I would have [the reader] trace the process of our moral decline, to watch, first, the sinking of the foundations of morality as the old teaching was allowed to lapse, then the rapidly increasing disintegration, then the final collapse of the whole edifice, and the dark dawning of our modern day when we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them.' It was a commonplace among Roman historians that things had got worse and worse; Sallust, for instance, blamed the destruction of Carthage and the capture of Greece for the start of the deterioration, because the one removed an enemy that had kept Rome on her toes, the other familiarized Rome with the enervating vices and luxuries of the Greek world.⁹ You will find in the early books of Livy several pessimistic asides, e.g. (III.20.5): 'fortunately, however, in those days authority, both religious and secular, was still a guide to conduct, and there was as yet no sign of our modern scepticism which interprets solemn compacts, such as are embodied in an oath or a law, to suit its own convenience'.

⁹ e.g. *Catiline* 9.1-3; *Jugurtha* 41.2.

Yet, on the other hand, there is also in Livy a sense of pride that Rome had now reached the zenith of her power and her achievement, and that all previous history was leading up to this glorious hour. Even in the Preface he speaks of Rome as 'the greatest nation in the world' and claims that her success has been such that she could legitimately claim to have a god (Mars) as her ancestor. So too Camillus's speech at the end of Book V is an inspiring panegyric of the rise of Rome and a promise of the still greater heights that lie ahead in the centuries to come. The culmination is in the present. 'Augustus Caesar brought peace to the world by land and sea' (I.19.3).

At first sight, then, there is a contradiction, an inner tension, in Livy's attitude to history and, in particular, to the place of his own generation. One can see exactly the same tension in Horace and Virgil between pessimism and optimism, between the evils of modern Rome and the dawning of a Golden Age. The resolution of this conflict lay, for Livy, in the education of character through the study of history, which, he says, 'is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see; and in that record you can find for yourself and your country both examples and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid'. Livy's remedy – all will be well if people's characters improve – was his own; there is no question, as the facts of his relations with the emperor show, of his handing out some party line for Augustus. Nevertheless it is interesting that his diagnosis and solution correspond closely with that of other thinking Romans of his age. Virgil, who in the *Georgics* had stressed the harshness of nature and the deterioration of life, used the long pageant of Roman legend and history in the *Aeneid* to illustrate those qualities, especially *pietas*, that had made and could keep Rome great, Horace has the same message (*Odes* III.24, written about 27 BC): 'whoever shall work to put an end to impious slaughter and civic savagery, if he shall seek to be inscribed on statues as the patron of cities, let him be brave to rein in uncontrolled licentiousness. . . . What is the point of sad lamentations if sin is not pruned by punishment or of laws that are useless without morality?' Above all Augustus himself attempted by legislation and by propaganda to effect a change

in Roman character. He introduced moral legislation in 28 BC (which he was forced by bitter opposition to withdraw) and undertook the restoration of 82 temples at Rome. At the same time he tried to popularize his ideals by giving them every publicity. In 27 BC he set up a golden shield in the Curia Julia commemorating his *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*. These and other virtues were constantly depicted throughout his reign on coins, public monuments and other objects that came to people's eyes.

There is, therefore, a real sense in which Livy's *History* was deeply rooted in the Augustan revival, despite stories that Livy's recitations from it at Rome were poorly attended. Its fame was immediate. There is a legend of a man who came all the way from Cadiz just to look at Livy.¹⁰ And it quickly established itself as a classic, being accepted as such by Tacitus¹¹ and by the critic and rhetorician Quintilian.¹² It superseded previous histories so completely that only scattered fragments of them have survived. Its very size, however, deterred men from reading it all, so that at an early date abridgements of it were made. A senator, Mettius Pompusianus, had an anthology of speeches from Livy which earned him death at the hands of the Emperor Domitian,¹³ and Martial refers in a poem to a 'pocket' Livy.¹⁴ These abridgements, of which three survive in part or whole, meant that by later antiquity only the most readable and exciting books of the original were still in circulation. The great pagan senator Q. Aurelius Symmachus was responsible about AD 396 for a new edition of the first ten books, presumably because they evoked for him the finest spirit of classical Rome, and it is to this edition that we owe the survival of these books through the Dark Ages.

¹⁰ Pliny, *Letters* II.3.8.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. *Agricola* 10.3.

¹² e.g. X.1.101 ff.

¹³ Suetonius, *Domitian* 10.3.

¹⁴ *Epigrams* XIV.190.

THE EVIDENCE

What sort of evidence did Livy have for the early history of Rome? It comes as something of a shock to discover that the first Roman to write about Rome's history, Q. Fabius Pictor (I.44.2), lived as late as 200 BC, over three hundred years after the expulsion of the Kings. Pictor was followed by a succession of historians who covered the same ground, adding new information or offering new interpretations. Livy refers to some of them, such as L. Calpurnius Piso (I.55.9) who was consul in 133 BC, C. Licinius Macer (IV.7.12) who was tribune of the *plebs* in 73 BC, Valerius Antias (IV.23.1) and Q. Aelius Tubero (IV.23.1), probably the son of a friend of Cicero's. They all have certain features in common: they were, for the most part, statesmen who turned to the writing of history as a leisure pastime; they were not interested in historical research as such but were concerned to use history as a means of reflecting the issues and controversies of their own times. Pictor, for instance, who wrote in Greek during the troubled times of the Second Punic War, was concerned to display Rome as a city with a heroic past which could rival Athens and Sparta in its achievements and its civilization. Licinius Macer, who was a partisan of Marius, rewrote history to foreshadow the policies and events of the Marian regime. Although they were interested in antiquarian curiosities and made use of them to add originality to their work, as Licinius Macer discovered and exploited some linen-rolls in the Temple of Juno Moneta giving the names of early magistrates (IV.7.12), they did not seriously investigate or question the credentials of the traditional version of Roman history which had become established by the time of Pictor. They took it on trust and embroidered it.

If, however, you examine in detail this traditional version as it is retold by Livy, you quickly discover that it is not a true record of the past. Many of the stories are not really Roman but Greek stories reclothed in Roman dress. Even some of the most famous turn out on inspection not to be native memories. The twins, Romulus and Remus, sons of a god, exposed by the river, suckled by a wolf and

discovered by a shepherd, are an adaptation of an old Near Eastern myth, found in Greece in the legend of Neleus and Pelias, sons of the god Poseidon, exposed on the river Enipeus and suckled by a bitch and a mare (I.4.3ff.). The fatal quarrel between the twins culminating in Remus derisively vaulting Romulus's walls recalls similar Greek legends of Oeneus and Toxeus or Poimander and Leucippus (I.7.2). The treachery and fate of Tarpeia was a familiar Hellenistic motif (I.11.6ff.). Sometimes the debt is even more obvious. Two of the most notorious events of Tarquinius Superbus's reign are openly imitated from the Greek historian Herodotus – the lopping of the poppy-heads (I.54.6) was Thrasyboulus's message to Periander (Hdt. 5.92.6) and the infiltration of Gabii by Sextus Tarquinius (I.53.5) was suggested by Zopyrus's ruse against Babylon (Hdt. III.154). Sometimes events which were chronologically close in Greek and Roman history have become assimilated. The tyrants at Athens were expelled as a result of a love-affair in 510 BC; it is no accident that the Tarquins are similarly expelled about 510 BC as a result of a love-affair also. The heroic stand of the 300 Fabii at Cremera (II.50) in 479 BC echoes down to the smallest particular the fate of the Spartans at Thermopylae. Even Coriolanus (II.34ff.) acquires the deeds and character of Themistocles who, banished from Athens in 471 BC, led his country's enemies against it. There is practically no extensive story from early Roman history which cannot be proved to be Greek in origin.

The Romans seem to have had no mythology of their own. They did not have the resources of oral epic or choral lyric by which the Greeks preserved and handed on the memories and myths of their pre-history. Nor were there substantial written records before the fourth century. At the beginning of his sixth book Livy writes that the majority of earlier records were destroyed in the fire which devastated much of Rome during the Gallic occupation in 386 BC. This fire can be traced archaeologically and evidently destroyed many of the main buildings, such as the Royal Palace (Regia) in the Forum, where such records might have been kept. When, therefore, the Romans came to reconstruct their own history in the centuries before Pictor, they had to borrow heavily from Greek literature and legend.

They also re-used events from their own more recent history. It

was one of the beliefs of the ancient world, first expressed by Thucydides, that human nature remains the same and, since men do the things that they do because they are the kind of people that they are, it was reasonable to expect that history would repeat itself in the past as well as in the future. Historians, familiar with the popular measures of the Gracchi, such as agrarian legislation and corn subsidies, assumed that similar tactics had been employed in earlier times. Hence they had no qualms about attributing these same measures to demagogic figures like Sp. Cassius (II.41) or Sp. Maelius (IV.13ff.). If such a dangerous plot as the Catilinarian Conspiracy could occur in 63 BC, there was every reason to suppose that many of its characteristic features would have occurred before, as in the plot by which Tarquinius Superbus gained the throne (I.47ff.) or in the abortive coup by the sons of Brutus (II.3-5).

Yet the fact that most of the flesh and blood of Livy's narrative is fictitious should not lead one to doubt the bare bones. There were at least four ways by which authentic facts were transmitted to the fourth and third century when the Romans became interested in their own history.

In the first place, Rome's neighbours to the south included several Greek colonies. Cumae, for instance, was founded as early as c. 750 BC and enjoyed a flourishing civilization comparable with that of mainland Greece and far more advanced than that of Rome. Greek writers were interested in the fortunes of the remarkable little town on the Tiber. There were probably local histories of Cumae which included information about Rome, especially since the Tarquins took refuge there (II.21.5). But the writers of Greece proper also paid attention to Roman history. We know, for instance, that the historians Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 500 BC) and Hellanicus of Mytilene (c. 450 BC) made reference in their works to Rome, while a fragment of Aristotle survives to show that he had a detailed knowledge of the Gallic occupation in 386 BC. A little later Timaeus of Sicily (c. 356-260 BC) gave a substantial account of Roman affairs in his *History*. The Etruscans, Rome's neighbours to the north (see pp. 13-14), may also have had a historical literature but, if so, it has left no trace.

Secondly, there was a variety of contemporary documents which

had lasted down to the first century BC. The earliest surviving inscription, a religious law from the Roman forum, is at least as old as 500 BC but Roman historians cite several other inscriptions which no longer exist but which have every sign of being genuine. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek contemporary of Livy, refers to an archaic inscription concerning Servius Tullius' dedication of the Temple of Diana (I.45).¹⁵ Polybius, 150 years earlier, had seen a treaty between the Romans and the Carthaginians which he dated to 507 BC:¹⁶ Polybius has been disbelieved but striking confirmation appeared in 1966, when parallel Punic and Etruscan texts, dating from about 500 BC, were discovered on gold leaves in a temple at the little port of Pyrgi, a few miles north of Rome. The scholar Verrius Flaccus, also a contemporary of Livy, seems to have transcribed an inscription from Rome, giving a list of notables killed in a battle against the Volsci: this battle may well be connected with the wars of Coriolanus (II.35ff.). Livy himself mentions that the treaty made by Sp. Cassius with the Latins was preserved on a bronze column (II.33.9) and alludes to a monument, also described by Cicero (*Phil.* IX.4-5), commemorating the four Roman ambassadors executed by Lars Tolumnius, King of Veii (IV.17.6). Above all, the great code of Roman Law, the Twelve Tables, which contained a mass of information about the social, legal and political situation in the middle of the fifth century, was on public display and was memorized by generations of Roman schoolchildren.

There were also records of a more regular kind. Every year from its foundation a special magistrate drove a nail into the wall of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol, probably as a means of averting plague. Later, enthusiasts came to count the nails, thereby establishing the date of the temple and so of the beginning of the Republic, if, as Polybius and Livy assert, the two events are connected – approximately 507 BC. This practice is also known from the Etruscan town of Nortia but nail-fixing as a means of time-reckoning was common in Rome: Cicero speaks of an annual calendar with holes opposite each day, on which you marked the day by

¹⁵ IV.26. ¹⁶ III.22.4-13.

moving a peg into the appropriate hole, and fragments of such a calendar have actually been discovered.¹⁷ The Roman religious year was complicated and its secrets were for a long time jealously guarded by a body of priests (*pontifices*). In order that the ordinary man might know which were holy days or special festivals and on what days he could conduct public or legal business, the *pontifices* annually erected a large whitened board outside the Royal Palace. On this they entered from time to time the events of special religious significance – the dates of festivals, the occurrence of untoward incidents (plagues, floods, eclipses, famines, triumphs, etc.), the census totals (I.44.2) and, probably, the names of the chief magistrates (praetors, as they were called at first; later, consuls) and priests. We do not know for certain what happened at the end of the year, but it seems likely that the principal items were transcribed into a book-roll to provide a body of precedents to help the *pontifices* with the maintenance of religion and that the board was then rewhitened for the following year. Despite Livy's assertion (how could he have known?) that most of what was in the Commentaries of the Pontifices perished in the fire of 386 BC (VI.1.2), it is clear that in fact much of it survived. The mass of petty detail which is recorded for the fifth century BC could not conceivably have been invented by imagination alone, and when a Pontifex Maximus, P. Mucius Scaevola, who had been consul in 133 BC, made these records (called the *Annales Maximi*) generally available by publishing them, he seems to have included material going back to the Regal period.

Thirdly, the Romans were conservative in their institutions. It is notable, for instance, that the festivals which still ranked as major occasions in the religious year in the first century BC were those which had been established at least four hundred years earlier. Many of them, e.g. the Robigalia (concerned with blight), belonged to a primitive agricultural community and were quite inappropriate to a busy, commercial city; many of them had become quite unintelligible. But they were still maintained. So too the cumbersome electoral and legislative system devised by Servius Tullius (I.43) – the *comitia*

¹⁷ *ad Atticum* V.14.1; *Notiz. Scavi* 4 (1928), 202 ff.

centuriata – remained the same with elaborations and refinements in Cicero's day. A scholar studying the religious and constitutional arrangements of his own time could validly work back from them to a picture of Roman society in the first years of the Republic.

Finally we should not underestimate the strength of memory. It is easy to believe that individual families would hand down the traditions of their own past, how the Fabii defended Cremera (II.50), how the Claudii migrated to Rome (II.16.4), how the Papirii served religion or how the Quinctii had provided a saviour of the state in Cincinnatus (III.26). Equally there were events of national importance that would impress themselves on public consciousness, such as the unification with the Sabines (I.13.8), the foundation of Ostia (I.33.9), the expulsion of the kings (I.60) or the war with Veii (V.1ff.).

The job of the historian is to separate fiction from fact and, on the basis of the available facts and with the help of such tools as archaeology, to reconstruct the story. In the following section a brief attempt is made to outline the history of early Rome, so far as it can be recovered, and to show how far it is imbedded in Livy's romantic narrative.

THE HISTORY

Traditionally Rome was founded in 753 BC but even in antiquity there had been many variant dates proposed, ranging from 814 to 729 BC, before Atticus and Varro established a conventional chronology. Apart from some short-lived Chalcolithic and Bronze Age settlements (perhaps corresponding to the legends about the Aborigines; see I.1.5), the first substantial habitation at Rome dates from the Iron Age. Unfortunately, the archaeologists still disagree radically about its date; Müller-Karpe would put it as early as the tenth century whereas Gjerstad favours a date around 800 BC. What is clear, however, is that there were two separate and distinct settlements, one on the Palatine and one on the Esquiline, almost from the beginning. The burial customs and the pottery styles of the two settlements are quite different. It seems probable that the site of Rome, with easily defended

hills, at a convenient crossing of the river Tiber and with good pasture, attracted two separate groups of graziers from the Alban and the Sabine mountains down to the lush coastal plains. There is, therefore, substance in the legend of the foundation from Alba Longa (I.3.4) and of the fusion between the Romans and the Sabines (I.13).

Early Rome was primarily a pastoral community. Its inhabitants built their huts on the tops of the hills and during the daytime led out their flocks and herds into the surrounding country. The ground-plans of some of these early huts (one of which, the *casa Romuli*, was preserved as a museum piece down to the Empire; see V.53.8) have been recovered and we can form an idea of what they looked like from urns, made in the shape of huts, in which the ashes of the dead were stored. The earliest inhabitants were a branch of the Italic people, an Indo-European tribe that had spread over Italy during the second half of the second millenium BC.

The advance of Rome, however, was due to the expansion of her mysterious neighbours to the north, the Etruscans. Some time, perhaps in the tenth century, groups of migrants, probably from the Balkans, arrived by sea in North Italy. Some of them came up the Adriatic and settled in the Po Valley (e.g. at Spina and Bologna), others came round the bottom of Italy and settled on the west coast at Tarquinia and other places. Both groups share a distinctive custom of burying their dead in two-storeyed urns which is obviously related to the great Urnfield cultures of Roumania that flourished from about 1600 BC. In Italy this culture, which absorbed the native population, is called Villanovan. The Villanovans were reinforced about 700 BC by a new wave of immigrants, probably displaced from Asia Minor by the troubled conditions of the Cimmerian invasions. The new arrivals brought with them many fertile ideas, including a taste for Greek and Phoenician artistic styles, new techniques for working metals, an aptitude for building proper cities rather than untidy villages, Near Eastern religious customs and, it seems, a sophisticated non-Indo-European language, preserved in numerous inscriptions but not yet fully understood, which we call Etruscan. This mixture of elements transformed the Villanovans into the Etruscans, from a simple, agricultural people into an urban nation of craftsmen and

traders, with a network of cities that stretched from the Po to the Tiber. It is, also, against this background that we should understand the legends of Antenor and Aeneas – refugees from Troy in Asia Minor who settled in the Po Valley and Latium respectively. Aeneas was from very early times a favourite subject for Etruscan artists. The legend of his carrying his father Anchises out of Troy is frequently portrayed in the later sixth century by Etruscan statuette- and scarab-makers.

The Etruscans were enterprising and outward-looking. They sought markets for their metal-work (there are large deposits of iron and copper in Etruria and on Elba) and for their pottery, and in return imported luxury goods from Greece, Egypt and Phoenicia. It was, therefore, inevitable that they should open a land-route to the Greek cities of Campania and Southern Italy. The easiest routes lay a few miles up-stream from Rome where there are good crossings of the Tiber at Fidenae (near Veii) and Lucus Feroniae. The road then led southwards past Praeneste, between the Apennines and the Alban Hills, to join the line of the Via Latina and on to Campania. But the site of Rome had other attractions. It was the last point before the sea where the Tiber could conveniently be crossed and so it gave access for the Etruscans to the rich plains of Latium. More important, salt was an essential commodity in the life of the great Etruscan cities inland and it could only be obtained at the big salt-beds at the mouth of the Tiber. The salt-road, called by the Romans the Via Salaria, led from these salt-beds, through Rome and so up the Tiber to cities such as Volsinii, Clusium and Perugia. Rome thus grew from an agricultural community into a major commercial entrepôt.

It is difficult to date the first infiltration of the Etruscans into Rome exactly. Livy gives a dramatic story of the migration of Lucumo, the grandson of an exiled Corinthian, Demaratus, with his family from Tarquinia to Rome, where, taking the name of L. Tarquinius, he managed to seize the throne on the death of Ancus Marcius *c.* 625 BC (I.34.2). The story is largely Greek romance but some features of it are true. There is good evidence that Corinthian exiles settled in Etruria in this period, ousted by the policies of the tyrant Periander; it is equally likely that the Tarquin family had connections both with

Tarquinia and with its neighbour Caere where they eventually took refuge (I.60.2) and where a remarkable tomb, containing fifth- to third-century inscriptions of the Tarcra family, was found in 1850; it is also clear that from about 625–600 BC Etruscan influences can be detected in Roman pottery and in such engineering works as the draining of the marsh where the Forum was later built. But it will not have been an adventurous *coup d'état*. Rather, small groups of Etruscans, from different cities, will have moved into Rome and set up their own communities until the population of Rome became a thoroughly mixed and integrated one in which the superior skills and abilities of the Etruscans predominated. This can be shown by the fact that the names of a very large number of Roman families in the Republic are Etruscan in etymology, e.g. the Sempronii, the Licinii, the Minucii, the Volumnii, the Larcii, the Herminii, and so on.

The earliest government of Rome comprised a king with military, religious and political power, a council (senate) of elders (*patres*) drawn from the chiefs of the leading families, and a consultative assembly constituted on a federal basis from the various parishes (*curiae*), where the different ethnic units lived, and called the *comitia curiata*. When, however, between about 600 and 575 BC the Etruscan element obtained the upper hand a number of significant changes were made. The city was unified by creating a single, central market-place, the Forum, and locating there certain communal buildings such as the shrine of Vesta and the Royal Palace. The king was invested with distinctively Etruscan regalia, special clothes and a ceremonial chair (*sella curulis*) which survived as symbols of Roman magistrates (I.8.3). The primitive religion which had been concerned chiefly to secure the successful operations of natural processes developed into an anthropomorphic religion on the Greek pattern; many new religious practices, such as augury and divination, were introduced now. The emphasis turned from pastoral to arable farming. Above all the distinction between ethnic groups which had survived under the curiate system was dissolved by creating three tribes, Ramnes, Tities and Luceres (the names are Etruscan), which were not based on residence or ethnic origin. For the first time the inhabitants of Rome became one people: they were Roman citizens. Later Romans had some

awareness of this, as one can see from Livy (e.g. I.45.3), but there was an irresistible tendency to attribute most of the characteristic political and religious institutions to the very first kings Romulus and Numa (I.7.21).

Once Rome had become a city, it became vulnerable and had to defend itself. Standing crops are easier to plunder than elusive cattle; fine buildings enriched with silver and terracotta offer a more tempting target than thatched huts. The earliest ditch defences of certain weak parts of the city may date from about 540 BC although the earliest earth-wall seems not to have been constructed before about 480 BC and the so-called Servian Wall belongs to the period after the Gallic occupation (I.44.3). We know nothing about the organization of the earliest Roman army but in the first phase of Etruscan influence at Rome it will have relied heavily upon a cavalry formed from the leading and wealthier elements in the city, supported by a loose array of more or less lightly armed infantry. These had been the tactics of earlier Greece and seem to have been standard in the contemporary Greek cities of Italy, such as Cumae, and in Etruria. The accounts given of the Battle of Lake Regillus (c. 496 BC; see II.19–20), although much embellished with Homeric touches, as Macaulay noted, show that this method of fighting was still prevalent at that date among the Latins; for the decisive role of the cavalry in the battle is proved by the dedication of a temple to Castor and Pollux, the patron deities of horsemanship, in the Roman forum (II.20.12). But in mainland Greece an epoch-making change had occurred. Argos, about 670 BC, was the first state to adopt a new system which relied upon a solid phalanx of well-drilled, well-armed infantry. The fashion quickly caught on and by 600 BC most of the Greek cities relied on infantry (hoplites as they were called) rather than cavalry which remained select and aristocratic but less effective. The change reached Rome in the middle of the sixth century; there is plenty of evidence, from the armour found in tombs to sculptured reliefs, to show that Rome, in common with most Etruscan cities, adopted some form of hoplite tactics between 570 and 540 BC.

The change had profound consequences. A hoplite army has to be recruited from the richer classes because the armour is comparatively

expensive and the tactics require leisure for drill and practice. Recruitment, therefore, has to be on the basis of wealth. This involved a reorganization of the Roman citizen-body. By a constitution unanimously attributed to King Servius Tullius, whose traditional dates are 578–535 BC, the adult male citizen population was assessed into two groups, one which possessed the minimum hoplite qualifications (*classis*) and the other which fell below that minimum (*infra classem*). The *classis* was subdivided into a number of centuries or bodies of 100, and supplied the manpower for the Roman legion. The qualifying amount is unknown. It must have been calculated in terms of property, cattle, goods, etc. since coinage was a very late arrival in Rome and *pecunia*, the Latin word for money, originally meant 'cattle' (cf. *pecus*). A further corollary was to make residence rather than birth the condition of citizenship so that many of the resident immigrants, who had previously been ineligible, could now be enrolled by the censors as citizens and hence as potential soldiers. Servius Tullius, therefore, replaced the three tribes by a tribal system based on residence, dividing the city into four and creating additional tribes to cover the country-districts. Such a system could be expanded as Rome's territory grew. The Roman historians were aware of these reforms although the document which Livy quotes, with the five classes, represents a much later elaboration of the Servian constitution (I.43).

Rome's new army gave her an advantage over her Latin neighbours. Indeed a policy of expansion seems to have been followed by Servius Tullius and his successor. Livy has glamorous tales about Rome heading a Latin alliance (I.45.3) and attacking cities as far away as Gabii, Ardea and Suessa Pometia. The tradition is often doubted but there may well be truth in it. The treaty with Carthage, recorded by Polybius (see above, p. 10), names several cities including Ardea as being in the Roman sphere of influence. Moreover the cult of Diana, established by Servius Tullius in the Aventine (see above p. 10), was directly modelled on the cult of Artemis at Ephesus. The latter was a federal cult, the centre of a league of Ionian Greek cities. We must assume that Servius Tullius intended his cult of Diana to serve the same purpose of marking Rome as the head of an alliance. By 510 BC

it can be argued that Rome had some sort of control over most of the Latin coast as far south as Tarracina (Anxur) and most of the left bank of the Tiber as far up-river as Caenina.

In 507 BC the form of government at Rome changed. The kings were expelled and replaced by a college of two annual magistrates, either immediately or after a short interval during which power was exercised by a single annually elected magistrate (the *praetor maximus*) assisted by subordinates. The date and cause of the change have been much discussed. The traditional Roman date, as implied by Livy's figures, was approximately 510 BC but this results from assimilation with the expulsion of the Pisistratids, the tyrants of Athens. It has for some time been fashionable on the Continent to down-date the expulsion of the Tarquins to the early or middle fifth century, because after about 475 BC there is archaeologically a marked decline in Etruscan influence at Rome and a falling-off of imports. There is little to commend this theory which rests on a mistaken assumption about the nature of the change. Whatever its cause, the expulsion of the Tarquins was not a revolt by the Latin population of Rome against the Etruscan immigrants. After the kings Rome remained as much an Etruscan city as before. Etruscan families still held prominent places; the dual magistracy is an Etruscan institution (*zilath*); the insignia of the consuls are entirely Etruscan in origin (*fasces*, for instance, have been found at Vetulonia); religion continued Etruscan in form and idea. For by 500 BC Rome had become an ethnically integrated city. Three things strongly support the traditional date. Roman annalists preserve a list of 'consuls' that stretches back to about 507 BC. Many of the names in this list are of families which later disappeared entirely or were of little importance. It is difficult to see how such a list could have been forged in the fourth or third centuries. It must represent authentic names either extracted from the Board put up outside the Royal Palace (I.56.4) or compiled, separately, like the Linen Books, containing the names of magistrates, found by Licinius Macer in the Temple of Juno Moneta and covering the period from about 445 BC onwards (IV.7.12). Secondly, recent research has tended to confirm the authenticity of the Carthaginian treaty recorded by Polybius under 507 BC which names *praetors* (*ἄνατοι*) but not a king: the spheres of

influence defined for both Carthage and Rome only fit this period and Carthaginian interest in the area has been confirmed by the Pyrgi inscriptions (see above p. 10). Thirdly, a date as late as 470 and 450 does not leave enough time for the political evolution of Rome which can be reconstructed during the fifth century.

If Livy's date, therefore, is approximately correct, it is less easy to establish the cause. The story in Livy is a melodrama (I.57-60) of a charming Hellenistic kind. Equally improbable, as we have seen above, is the theory that it was a revolt against the Etruscans as such. It may have been the result of foreign intervention. Lars Porsenna of Clusium certainly campaigned in Latium during the period 507/6-505, and the defeat of his army at Aricia (II.14.7) was probably recorded by the Greek historians of Cumae. Roman patriotism pretended that he failed to conquer Rome but the truth seems to have survived in a few sources despite the official version. Lars Porsenna *did* capture Rome and he may well have decided to set up a puppet government. This, however, presupposes that there was a body of people in Rome who were opposed to the Tarquins and the real reason for the change of government may, therefore, lie in political and social factors. The experience of Greek cities was that the introduction of a hoplite army heightened the political awareness of the richer classes. They had to provide the soldiers for the citizen-army and, in consequence, claimed an increasing say in how that army was to be used and how the state was to be run. The centuriate organization of Servius Tullius was primarily a military reform but it was also used as the basis for an electoral and legislative assembly - the *comitia centuriata* - which largely replaced the older curiate assembly. Just as in Argos, Corinth, Mytilene and elsewhere the tyrants were deposed in favour of some form of democracy during the sixth century BC, so at Rome the kings had become an anachronism. This is true, whether the last Tarquin was as Proud as Livy paints him or whether he was a conscientious, patriotic and successful monarch.

At all events the start of the Republic coincided with troubled times for Rome and Latium. The hegemony which the Tarquins had built up collapsed in the face of Porsenna's invasions and revolts of the Latins. The picture of chaos and insecurity is confirmed by an

episode at this time which was never incorporated into the Roman historical tradition. An Etruscan wall-painting from Vulci depicts a man called Mastarna rescuing a comrade, Cneies Vibenna, while another shows the death of Cn. Tarchunies the Roman. This Etruscan tradition was known to the Emperor Claudius, who refers to it in an extant speech.¹⁸ It must have been a brief exploit by an Etruscan adventurer who seized Rome for a short while in the confusion following the expulsion of the Tarquins. Like the humiliating success of Porsenna it was hushed up by the late Roman historians. Another indication is the activity of the Sabines, a hill people to the north-east of Rome. They seem to have taken advantage of the prevailing conditions and moved down the left bank of the Tiber, plundering and capturing as they went. There are trustworthy notices of Roman encounters with the Sabines in the years following 505 BC (II.16ff.). Moreover Livy records the settlement of the Claudii, a Sabine family, in a newly acquired stretch of territory across the Anio (II.16.5) and the creation of two new tribes in that area in 495 BC (II.21.7). Even if the specification of the Sabine settlers as Claudii is false (for the Claudii, although Sabine in origin, were probably established in Rome much earlier), the detail about the new settlements and tribes is undoubtedly historical and reflects contemporary upheavals and movements of population.

The climax came when Rome found herself threatened by a league of Latin states whom she had once dominated, led by Tusculum, Aricia and Lavinium. She took the offensive and defeated them in a decisive battle at Lake Regillus near Tusculum (II.19-20). This battle proved the superiority of hoplites over cavalry. It was commemorated by a shrine of Castor and Pollux which has been proved to have been built in the early fifth century. It restored Roman control of Latium and was followed up by a treaty, recorded on bronze (II.33.9), which recognized Rome's mastery and settled the pattern of Rome's expansionist methods for centuries to come. Livy's account of the following fifty years is almost monopolized by a series of petty and inconclusive wars with hill-people, the Aequi, the Volsci and the Hernici, who

¹⁸ *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 212.

harassed Rome's frontiers and threatened to overrun the coastal plain of Latium. Its centre-piece is the legendary tragedy of Coriolanus, who led the Volsci to the gates of Rome. Such wars have left little mark archaeologically but we can detect the incursion of the Volsci by a number of archaic inscriptions in the Volscian language which have been found for instance at Tarracina and Velitrae. The pressure by the hill-people at this date fits the historical situation. So long as the Etruscans had a lively interest in the south, they maintained a strong communications corridor from Etruria through the Praeneste gap down to Campania, which effectively isolated the hill-people from Latium; but a series of crushing defeats, notably at Cumae in 474 BC at the hands of the Syracusans, forced the Etruscans to withdraw to Etruria proper and allowed the Aequi and Volsci to encroach on Latium just as it allowed the Samnites to overrun Campania. Rome with the help of her Latin allies gradually stabilized the situation but it would have meant annual campaigns and a war of steady attrition. The constant military activity in the fifty years from 505 to 455 only helped to exacerbate the problems which were already arising in Rome itself.

The social and economic evolution which led to the kings being replaced by consuls had other and more serious consequences. It did not so much matter when ultimate authority rested with a king that the poorer classes had no voice and few rights because the rich were not that much better placed; but the centuriate organization gave a definite say to one body of citizens, perhaps 10,000 out of a probable adult male population of between 30,000 and 60,000, and denied it to the rest. The poor may not have been concerned to have any part in government, but in hard times they did need some safeguards against the law which, being unwritten, was interpreted and controlled by *pontifices* and magistrates and was ultimately made and supervised by the centuriate assembly. And times were hard. The constant warfare damaged agriculture; the collapse of Etruscan power affected trade. In addition there is ample evidence that Latium was hit by a series of plagues in the first part of the fifth century and manpower may have been further debilitated by the advent of malaria. One sign of this is the dedication of several temples, for the purpose of religion is to

secure the goodwill of the gods in the operation of nature. Temples were built to Ceres, a corn-goddess, in 493 BC, to Saturn, a blight-god, in 496 BC, Mercury, a god of trade, in 495 BC, and Apollo, a god of healing, in 433 BC (there had been an earlier cult): the dates are mostly confirmed archaeologically. The clearest evidence is the steady decline of imported pottery from about 500 BC to 450 BC. Debt thus became endemic, aggravated by the absence of money, for a farmer could not pay his debts in corn if he had no corn to pay. Rome had a particularly harsh procedure for debt (*nexum*) whereby a debtor, either voluntarily or compulsorily, transferred his body (his services) to his creditor in return for a loan. By becoming in effect a bondsman, he had no real means of earning the wherewithal to repay the debt. The procedure was incorporated in the Twelve Tables and is vividly described by Livy (II.23).

The depressed state of the poor classes, craftsman and peasant farmer alike, led to great bitterness at Rome. The poor felt that they were helpless at the hands of the powerful, even though Roman society was organized in such a way that many of the poor were under the moral protection (as *clientes*) of a patron whose duty was supposed to be to look after their interests in return for their support. In Livy this conflict, the Struggle of the Orders, as it has come to be called, is identified with a conflict between two social groups, the patricians and the plebeians. The patricians originally were simply the descendants of the early *patres*, the heads of families who formed the senate. They enjoyed certain exclusive and important religious privileges: for instance, on the death in office of the magistrates, the residual power of the state devolved on them; certain offices, such as the Priesthood of Jupiter, were open only to them. They were the hereditary aristocracy. The distinguishing features of the plebeians have never been satisfactorily explained. They can hardly be identical with those who were too poor to qualify for the centuriate organization (*infra classem*), because in late history many of the great families that played a prominent role in the first decades of the Republic, such as the Cassii and the Verginii, were certainly not classified as patrician but as plebeian. Such families had presumably migrated to Rome later than the original selection of *patres* or the increase attributed to king

Tarquinius Priscus. Yet the first watch-dogs of the poor were almost certainly called the tribunes of the *plebs*. The problem of the plebeians has not been solved – like ‘Tory’ it may have changed and evolved in meaning as so many political words do – and the distinction between patrician and plebeian is probably irrelevant to the understanding of the history of the first five books of Livy. What mattered was the gulf between the privileged and the underprivileged. In their search for remedies the plebeians turned naturally for inspiration to their Greek neighbours in the south, because they had more democratic institutions and a more developed system of public justice. It is significant that the cult of Ceres, which attracted the special devotion of the plebeians, was derived from Cumae.

The prime need was protection against oppression. The Roman historical tradition records that in 494 BC the *plebs* went on strike and elected two officers of their own body called tribunes. The number was increased to four in 471 BC. The tribunes had no constitutional power. Their power stemmed from the resolution of their fellows to rally to their aid, using force if necessary. Any Roman, threatened with legal proceedings, conscription or other oppressive acts, could run to a tribune and invoke his protection. In the face of such defiance the rich could do little. The tribunate by itself was only a last resort for the desperate and did not go far towards healing the real ills of society. These required more radical treatment. The agitation continued until in 451 BC the government agreed to set up a Commission of Ten to draw up a code of laws (III.33.3). The commission has been greatly written up by the historians. The visit to Athens to study the law of Solon (III.32.1) and the melodramatic story of Verginia (III.44ff.) are doubtless later accretions, but the Twelve Tables were set up and their surviving contents fit them firmly in the middle of the fifth century. It is hard to know how far they merely codified existing laws and how far they instituted reforms. Greek influences suggest that the law-givers consulted the codes of neighbouring Greek states, which should mean that they were prescribing as well as describing the laws. Changes, for instance, in the debt-law, in the summary jurisdiction of the magistrates and in the right of trial before the *comitia centuriata* seem clear. But the chief value of the

Twelve Tables, together with the simultaneous publication of the religious calendar containing the dates of festivals, etc., was that it made justice open and equitable. It listed all the things that could and could not be done, down to petty regulations about wills and funeral expenses. It did not cure Rome's economic or political ills but it restored confidence within the community.

This confidence was soon to be tried. While the wars on Rome's southern frontiers still continued, necessitating an increase both in the Roman army and in the number of supreme commanders (the consular tribunes; IV.7.1), a new and much more dangerous threat had arisen to the north. Nine miles from Rome lay the rich and impressive city of Veii which spread over a tongue of land nearly seven miles in circumference. The site is a fine one and recent excavations, especially by the British School of Archaeology at Rome, have added greatly to our knowledge of it. Veii commanded the right bank of the Tiber, with a bridgehead on the left bank at the rocky citadel of Fidenae to guard the crossing, and from it a great network of roads spread out to all the other cities of south Etruria. It was in a real sense the gateway to Etruria. Veii's wealth went back to Villanovan times. It was based partly on farming, partly on its situation as a trading centre with access to the salt-beds on the coast, and partly on its manufacture of terracotta. Veian artists were commissioned to make the statues for the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus at Rome and some magnificent examples of their art have been discovered at Veii itself. But Rome and Veii were too close. They could not expand without coming into conflict. There had been earlier engagements, notably the Roman defeat at Cremera in 479 BC, but the main struggle belongs to the second half of the century. Rome seems to have taken the initiative, but whether this represents a political victory for the plebeians against the nobles, who may have had ties with the nobility of Veii, is quite uncertain. In general Livy's account is plausible. The first objective was Fidenae, a perpetual pinprick in Rome's side (IV.22). The second was the reduction of Veii itself in 396 BC after a prolonged siege – ten years according to Livy but the length has been exaggerated to make a parallel with the Trojan War. The name given to the king of Veii in 438 BC, Lars Tolumnius (IV.17.1), has been found on Veian

inscriptions. The capture and destruction of the city is clearly proved by the excavations although its subsequent desolation was not as absolute as Livy makes out. One intriguing detail provides a good example of the relationship of fact to fiction in Roman historiography. Livy tells how Veii eventually fell because the Romans managed to tunnel into the citadel (V.21.8). One of the features of Veii is the large number of drainage tunnels (*cuniculi*) which the Veians cut in the soft volcanic rock. The purpose of such tunnels, which are widespread in south Etruria and which required a high degree of engineering skill, was to control the floods that follow torrential rain-storms and to prevent the top-soil being washed away. Whether the Romans used one of these tunnels to effect an entry into Veii or not, they impressed themselves on Roman memory.

It is at first sight surprising that the other Etruscan cities did not come to Veii's rescue but, although there was a league of Twelve Cities, it was a religious rather than a political league, and Etruscan cities, like Greek city-states, seem to have been very independent of one another. But there was also another reason. About 500 BC Celtic tribes began to penetrate northern Italy. Some of them settled in the Po Valley in the areas later called Cispadane and Transpadane Gaul where numerous Celtic tribes have been found. Others pressed down to the east coast into Picenum where tombs of about 490 BC have been found, or crossed the Apennines into Etruria. Their marauding activities in the latter half of the century would have distracted the attention of the other Etruscans. It was an army of such Celts that in 386 BC marched down the Tiber to inflict a staggering defeat on the Romans and to capture and burn Rome itself. The traces of that conflagration are found in every excavation in the Roman forum.

Book 5 ends on a triumphant note with Camillus's great speech attesting the grandeur of Rome and evoking the most loyal sentiments of patriotism (I.51.54). In fact Rome's power was shattered. It took fifty years to recover from the Gallic occupation.

BOOK ONE

Rome under the Kings

The task of writing a history of our nation from Rome's earliest days fills me, I confess, with some misgiving, and even were I confident in the value of my work, I should hesitate to say so. I am aware that for historians to make extravagant claims is, and always has been, all too common: every writer on history tends to look down his nose at his less cultivated predecessors, happily persuaded that he will better them in point of style, or bring new facts to light. But however that may be, I shall find satisfaction in contributing – not, I hope, ignobly – to the labour of putting on record the story of the greatest nation in the world. Countless others have written on this theme and it may be that I shall pass unnoticed amongst them; if so, I must comfort myself with the greatness and splendour of my rivals, whose work will rob my own of recognition.

My task, moreover, is an immensely laborious one. I shall have to go back more than seven hundred years, and trace my story from its small beginnings up to these recent times when its ramifications are so vast that any adequate treatment is hardly possible. I am aware, too, that most readers will take less pleasure in my account of how Rome began and in her early history; they will wish to hurry on to more modern times and to read of the period, already a long one, in which the might of an imperial people is beginning to work its own ruin. My own feeling is different; I shall find antiquity a rewarding study, if only because, while I am absorbed in it, I shall be able to turn my eyes from the troubles which for so long have tormented the modern world, and to write without any of that over-anxious consideration which may well plague a writer on contemporary life, even if it does not lead him to conceal the truth.

Events before Rome was born or thought of have come to us in old tales with more of the charm of poetry than of a sound historical

record, and such traditions I propose neither to affirm nor refute. There is no reason, I feel, to object when antiquity draws no hard line between the human and the supernatural: it adds dignity to the past, and, if any nation deserves the privilege of claiming a divine ancestry, that nation is our own; and so great is the glory won by the Roman people in their wars that, when they declare that Mars himself was their first parent and father of the man who founded their city, all the nations of the world might well allow the claim as readily as they accept Rome's imperial dominion.

These, however, are comparatively trivial matters and I set little store by them. I invite the reader's attention to the much more serious consideration of the kind of lives our ancestors lived, of who were the men, and what the means both in politics and war by which Rome's power was first acquired and subsequently expanded; I would then have him trace the process of our moral decline, to watch, first, the sinking of the foundations of morality as the old teaching was allowed to lapse, then the rapidly increasing disintegration, then the final collapse of the whole edifice, and the dark dawning of our modern day when we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them. The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see; and in that record you can find for yourself and your country both examples and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid.

I hope my passion for Rome's past has not impaired my judgement; for I do honestly believe that no country has ever been greater or purer than ours or richer in good citizens and noble deeds; none has been free for so many generations from the vices of avarice and luxury; nowhere have thrift and plain living been for so long held in such esteem. Indeed, poverty, with us, went hand in hand with contentment. Of late years wealth has made us greedy, and self-indulgence has brought us, through every form of sensual excess, to be, if I may so put it, in love with death both individual and collective.

But bitter comments of this sort are not likely to find favour, even when they have to be made. Let us have no more of them, at least at

the beginning of our great story. On the contrary, I should prefer to borrow from the poets and begin with good omens and with prayers to all the host of heaven to grant a successful issue to the work which lies before me.

It is generally accepted that after the fall of Troy the Greeks kept up hostilities against all the Trojans except Aeneas and Antenor. These two men had worked consistently for peace and the restoration of Helen, and for that reason, added to certain personal connections of long standing, they were allowed to go unmolested. Each had various adventures: Antenor joined forces with the Eneti, who had been driven out of Paphlagonia and, having lost their king, Pylaemenes, at Troy, wanted someone to lead them as well as somewhere to settle. He penetrated to the head of the Adriatic and expelled the Euganei, a tribe living between the Alps and the sea, and occupied that territory with a mixed population of Trojans and Eneti. The spot where they landed is called Troy and the neighbouring country the Trojan district. The combined peoples came to be known as Venetians.

Aeneas was forced into exile by similar troubles; he, however, was destined to lay the foundations of a greater future. He went first to Macedonia, then in his search for a new home sailed to Sicily, and from Sicily to the territory of Laurentum. This part of Italy too, like the spot where Antenor landed, is known as Troy. Aeneas's men in the course of their almost interminable wanderings had lost all they possessed except their ships and their swords; once on shore, they set about scouring the countryside for what they could find, and while thus engaged they were met by a force of armed natives who, under their king Latinus, came hurrying up from the town and the surrounding country to protect themselves from the invaders. There are two versions of what happened next: according to one, there was a fight in which Latinus was beaten; he then came to terms with Aeneas and cemented the alliance by giving him his daughter in marriage. According to the other, the battle was about to begin when Latinus, before the trumpets could sound the charge, came forward with his captains and invited the foreign leaders to a parley. He then asked Aeneas who his men were and where they had come from, why they

had left their homes and what was their object in landing on Laurentian territory. He was told in reply that the men were Trojans, their leader Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Venus; that their native town had been burnt to the ground and now they were fugitives in search of some place where they could build a new town to settle in. Latinus, hearing their story, was so deeply impressed by the noble bearing of the strangers and by their leader's high courage either for peace or war, that he gave Aeneas his hand in pledge of friendship from that moment onward. A treaty was made; the two armies exchanged signs of mutual respect; Aeneas accepted the hospitality of Latinus, who gave him his daughter in marriage, thus further confirming the treaty of alliance by a private and domestic bond solemnly entered into in the presence of the Gods of his hearth.

The Trojans could no longer doubt that at last their travels were over and that they had found a permanent home. They began to build a settlement, which Aeneas named Lavinium after his wife Lavinia. A child was soon born of the marriage: a boy, who was given the name Ascanius.

The Trojans and the Latins were soon jointly involved in war. Turnus, prince of the Rutuli, to whom Latinus's daughter Lavinia had been pledged before Aeneas's arrival, angered by the insult of having to step down in favour of a stranger, attacked the combined forces of Aeneas and Latinus. Both sides suffered in the subsequent struggle: the Rutuli were defeated, but the victors lost their leader Latinus. Turnus and his people, in their anxiety for the future, then looked for help to Mezentius, king of the rich and powerful Etruscans, whose seat of government was at Caere, at that time a wealthy town. Mezentius needed little persuasion to join the Rutuli, as from the outset he had been far from pleased by the rise of the new settlement, and now felt that the Trojan power was growing much more rapidly than was safe for its neighbours. In this dangerous situation Aeneas conferred the native name of Latins upon his own people; the sharing of a common name as well as a common polity would, he felt, strengthen the bond between the two peoples. As a result of this step the original settlers were no less loyal to their king Aeneas than were the Trojans themselves. Trojans and Latins were rapidly becoming

one people, and this gave Aeneas confidence to make an active move against the Etruscans, in spite of their great strength. Etruria, indeed, had at this time both by sea and land filled the whole length of Italy from the Alps to the Sicilian strait with the noise of her name; none the less Aeneas refused to act on the defensive and marched out to meet the enemy. The Latins were victorious, and for Aeneas the battle was the last of his labours in this world. He lies buried on the river Numicus. Was he man or god? However it be, men call him Jupiter Indiges – the local Jove.

Aeneas's son Ascanius was still too young for a position of authority; Lavinia, however, was a woman of great character, and acted as regent until Ascanius came of age and was able to assume power as the successor of his father and grandfather. There is some doubt – and no one can pretend to certainty on something so deeply buried in the mists of time – about who precisely this Ascanius was. Was it the one I have been discussing, or was it an elder brother, the son of Creusa, who was born before the sack of Troy and was with Aeneas in his escape from the burning city – the Iulus, in fact, whom the Julian family claim as their eponym? It is at any rate certain that Aeneas was his father, and – whatever the answer to the other question may be – it can be taken as a fact that he left Lavinium to found a new settlement. Lavinium was by then a populous and, for those days, a rich and flourishing town, and Ascanius left it in charge of his mother (or stepmother, if you will) and went off to found his new settlement on the Alban hills. This town, strung out as it was along a ridge, was named Alba Longa. Its foundation took place about thirty years after that of Lavinium; but the Latins had already grown so strong, especially since the defeat of the Etruscans, that neither Mezentius, the Etruscan king, nor any other neighbouring people dared to attack them, even when Aeneas died and the control of things passed temporarily into the hands of a woman, and Ascanius was still a child learning the elements of kingship. By the terms of the treaty between the Latins and Etruscans the river Albula (now the Tiber) became the boundary between the two territories.

Ascanius was succeeded by his son Silvius – 'born in the woods' – and he by his son Aeneas Silvius, whose heir was Latinus Silvius. By

him several new settlements were made, and given the name of Old Latins. All the kings of Alba subsequently kept the cognomen *Silvius*. Next in succession to *Latinius* was *Alba*; then *Atys*, then *Capys*, then *Capetus*, then *Tiberinus* – who was drowned crossing the *Albula* and gave that river the name by which succeeding generations have always known it. *Tiberinus* was succeeded by *Agrippa*, *Agrippa* by his son *Romulus Silvius*, who was struck by lightning and bequeathed his power to *Aventinus*. *Aventinus* was buried on the hill, now a part of the city of *Rome*, and still bearing his name. *Proca*, the next king, had two sons, *Numitor* and *Amulius*, to the elder of whom, *Numitor*, he left the hereditary realm of the *Silvian* family; that, at least, was his intention, but respect for seniority was flouted, the father's will ignored and *Amulius* drove out his brother and seized the throne. One act of violence led to another; he proceeded to murder his brother's male children, and made his niece, *Rhea Silvia*, a *Vestal*, ostensibly to do her honour, but actually by condemning her to perpetual virginity to preclude the possibility of issue.

But (I must believe) it was already written in the book of fate that this great city of ours should arise, and the first steps be taken to the founding of the mightiest empire the world has known – next to *God's*. The *Vestal Virgin* was raped and gave birth to twin boys. *Mars*, she declared, was their father – perhaps she believed it, perhaps she was merely hoping by the pretence to palliate her guilt. Whatever the truth of the matter, neither gods nor men could save her or her babes from the savage hands of the king. The mother was bound and flung into prison; the boys, by the king's order, were condemned to be drowned in the river. *Destiny*, however, intervened; the *Tiber* had overflowed its banks; because of the flooded ground it was impossible to get to the actual river, and the men entrusted to do the deed thought that the flood-water, sluggish though it was, would serve their purpose. Accordingly they made shift to carry out the king's orders by leaving the infants on the edge of the first flood-water they came to, at the spot where now stands the *Ruminal fig-tree* – said to have once been known as the *fig-tree of Romulus*. In those days the country thereabouts was all wild and uncultivated, and the story goes that when the basket in which the infants had been exposed

was left high and dry by the receding water, a she-wolf, coming down from the neighbouring hills to quench her thirst, heard the children crying and made her way to where they were. She offered them her teats to suck and treated them with such gentleness that Faustulus, the king's herdsman, found her licking them with her tongue. Faustulus took them to his hut and gave them to his wife Larentia to nurse. Some think that the origin of this fable was the fact that Larentia was a common whore and was called *Wolf* by the shepherds.

Such, then, was the birth and upbringing of the twins. By the time they were grown boys, they employed themselves actively on the farm and with the flocks and began to go hunting in the woods; their strength grew with their resolution, until not content only with the chase they took to attacking robbers and sharing their stolen goods with their friends the shepherds. Other young fellows joined them, and they and the shepherds would fleet the time together, now in serious talk, now in jollity.

Even in that remote age the Palatine hill (which got its name from the Arcadian settlement Pallanteum) is supposed to have been the scene of the gay festival of the Lupercalia. The Arcadian Evander, who many years before held that region, is said to have instituted there the old Arcadian practice of holding an annual festival in honour of Lycean Pan (afterwards called *Inuus* by the Romans), in which young men ran about naked and disported themselves in various pranks and fooleries. The day of the festival was common knowledge, and on one occasion when it was in full swing some brigands, incensed at the loss of their ill-gotten gains, laid a trap for Romulus and Remus. Romulus successfully defended himself, but Remus was caught and handed over to Amulius. The brigands laid a complaint against their prisoner, the main charge being that he and his brother were in the habit of raiding Numitor's land with an organized gang of ruffians and stealing the cattle. Thereupon Remus was handed over for punishment to Numitor.

Now Faustulus had suspected all along that the boys he was bringing up were of royal blood. He knew that two infants had been exposed by the king's orders, and the rescue of his own two fitted perfectly in point of time. Hitherto, however, he had been unwilling to declare

*'I hope my passion for Rome's past has not
impaired my judgement; for I do honestly believe
that no country has ever been greater or purer than
ours or richer in good citizens and noble deeds'*

Livy (c. 59 BC–AD 17) dedicated most of his life to writing some 142 volumes of history, the first five of which comprise *The Early History of Rome*. With stylistic brilliance, he chronicles nearly 400 years of history, from the founding of Rome (traditionally dated to 757 BC) to the Gallic invasion in 386 BC – an era that witnessed the reign of seven kings, the establishment of the Republic, civil strife and brutal conflict. Bringing compelling characters to life, and re-presenting familiar tales – including the tragedy of Coriolanus and the story of Romulus and Remus – *The Early History* is a truly epic work, and a passionate warning that Rome should learn from its history.

This edition of Aubrey de Sélincourt's translation contains Robert Ogilvie's original introduction, a bibliographical appendix by Stephen Oakley examining the text in the light of recent Livy scholarship, a detailed index and maps.

Translated by AUBREY DE SÉLINCOURT

with an introduction by R. M. OGILVIE and a preface by S. P. OAKLEY

P E N G U I N  C L A S S I C S

Cover: Detail from an Etruscan bronze sculpture known as *The Capitoline She-Wolf* (c. 500 BC), in the Musei Capitolini, Rome (photo: AKG Images/Erich Lessing)



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