

The Establishment of the Roman Republic – Outline

I. Geography of Rome

- a. Protection for Rome and Italy
 - i. Rome built on seven hills
 - ii. Alps
 - 1. Barrier to the north
 - iii. Seas
 - 1. Barriers on other three sides
 - iv. Poor harbors in eastern Italy
 - 1. Little interference from cultures to the east
- b. Unification of Italy under Rome
 - i. Rome centrally located on peninsula
 - 1. Good location for capital city
 - ii. Apennine Mountains run north-south
 - 1. Not a barrier to unification of the peninsula
- c. Farming and trade
 - i. Fertile soil and mild climate
 - 1. Good for farming
 - 2. No need to import foodstuffs
 - ii. Central location in Mediterranean
 - 1. Good for trade
 - 2. Launching point for expansion throughout Mediterranean region

II. Others living in Italy

- a. Greek colonists
 - i. Eastern portion of Sicily
 - ii. “Heel” and “toe” of Italy
- b. Carthaginian colonists
 - i. Western portion of Sicily
- c. Gauls
 - i. Between Alps and Po River

III. The Etruscans

- a. Mystery – their origins are lost to prehistory
 - i. Numerous hypotheses
 - 1. Indigenous (first humans to live in region)
 - 2. Migrated from east, north, or south, circa 1000 BCE
- b. Lived north of Rome
 - i. Region today called “Tuscany” after them (ancient Etruria)
 - ii. Enemies of the Romans

- c. Taught the Romans:
 - i. Arch in architecture, drainage and sewer-building, phalanx military formation

IV. The Latins

- a. Indo-European tribe from the north
- b. Circa 1200 BCE – settled south of the Tiber River in an area that came to be called *Latium*
- c. Latin League formed for protection
 - i. Rome was the leading city in this league
- d. Legend of the founding of Rome in 753 BCE
 - i. Twin brothers Romulus and Remus
 - 1. Ordered drowned by uncle who wanted the throne
 - 2. Instead raised by a she-wolf
 - 3. Grew up and killed their uncle
 - 4. Romulus killed Remus in a fight over what to name the city

V. Three major periods of Roman history

- a. Roman origins
 - i. Circa 1000-509 BCE
 - ii. Earliest settlements on Palatine Hill
 - iii. 753 BCE – legendary founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus
- b. Roman republic
 - i. 509-31 BCE
 - ii. Etruscan kings overthrown under leadership of Lucius Junius Brutus
 - iii. Republic = “thing of the people”
 - iv. Ended with the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE
- c. Roman empire
 - i. 31 BCE-476 CE
 - ii. Began when Octavian’s forces defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra
 - iii. End of Western Roman Empire traditionally dated to 476 CE, when last emperor, Romulus Augustus, deposed by barbarian invaders
 - iv. Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire continued until conquered by the Turks in 1453

VI. Government – patricians and plebeians

- a. Patricians
 - i. Nobles
 - ii. Controlled the government of the Republic
 - 1. Executive power
 - a. Two consuls elected for a one-year term
 - b. Elected by adult male patricians
 - 2. Legislature
 - a. Senate – upper house
 - i. About 300 patricians
 - ii. Served for life
 - iii. Controlled by about 12 families
 - b. Assembly – lower house
 - i. All free adult males who could afford weaponry
 - ii. All acts had to be approved by the Senate

- b. Plebeians
 - i. Common people
 - ii. Few rights and little power
 - 1. Could not run for public office
 - 2. Could not marry into the nobility (patrician class)
 - 3. Little say in the creation of laws
 - iii. Continuously threatened to secede from Rome and create their own city
 - iv. Over the centuries, they were granted more and more rights

VII. Other elected Roman officials

- a. **Aediles** – ran city (“local”) government
- b. **Censors** – kept track of citizen lists, and in later years took charge of public morality
- c. **Dictators** – absolute power; elected by the Senate in times of emergency to rule for six months
- d. **Praetors** – in charge of administering justice
- e. **Quaesters** – in charge of Roman finances

VIII. Plebeians earn greater rights – growth of democracy in Rome

- a. **Assembly** – Senate could no longer veto laws made by the Assembly (the “Comitia”)
- b. **Intermarriage** – plebeians were given the right to marry patricians
- c. **Public offices** – opened to plebeians
- d. **Tribunes** – right to elect tribunes; these were officials with veto (“I forbid”) power over the Senate
- e. **Twelve Tables** – laws were written down; this protected plebeians from biased patrician judges; 450 BCE

IX. From Rome to Italy

- a. 509-265 BCE
 - i. Rome came to control all of Italy south of the Po River
- b. 386 BCE
 - i. Gauls from the north plundered and burned Rome
 - ii. Rome got rid of the Gauls by paying them a large amount of gold
- c. Rome turned its direction from the Gauls and conquered:
 - i. Remaining Etruscans
 - ii. Former allies in the Latin League
 - iii. Tribes in central Italy (such as the Samnites in 290 BCE)
 - iv. Greeks in the south

X. Why was Rome so successful?

- a. Infrastructure
 - i. Few geographical barriers on the Italian peninsula
 - ii. Military roads radiated from Rome
 - 1. Troops could be sent quickly to quell unrest in any area
 - 2. Dual purpose – roads came to allow quick and easy travel by tax collectors, traders, travelers, and officials
 - iii. Famous roads
 - 1. Appian Way
 - 2. Flaminian Way
 - 3. Valerian Way

- iv. Public funds dedicated to building and maintaining the Republic's infrastructure
 - 1. Aqueducts – brought water to cities
 - 2. Public toilets
 - 3. Public baths
 - 4. Bridges
- b. Military ability
 - i. Great soldiers
 - ii. Well-trained
 - iii. All volunteers
- c. Strategy – divide and control
 - i. Rome's fear:
 - 1. That allies and colonies would unite against Roman rule
 - ii. Rome's solution:
 - 1. Keep groups under Roman control disunited
 - iii. How it was done:
 - 1. Forbade alliances between them
 - 2. Separate privileges and treaties
- d. Treatment of conquered peoples
 - i. Conquered peoples were treated well
 - 1. Some received full Roman citizenship, including suffrage (right to vote)
 - 2. Some controlled their own affairs but paid tribute and gave soldiers to the Roman army
 - ii. Colonies
 - 1. Rome established colonies in conquered areas, each protected by a garrison of Roman soldiers]
 - 2. Republic encouraged intermarriage
 - a. Led to the spread of Roman culture and language (Latin)

XI. Review questions

- a. What are the geographical barriers of the Italian peninsula?
- b. Apart from the Latins, what other groups lived in Italy?
- c. According to tradition, who founded the Roman Republic in 509 BCE?
- d. Who were the patricians, and what rights did they have?
- e. Who were the plebeians, and what rights did they have?
- f. Why was Rome so successful?