

The Establishment of the Roman Republic



Geography of Rome

Protection for Rome and Italy

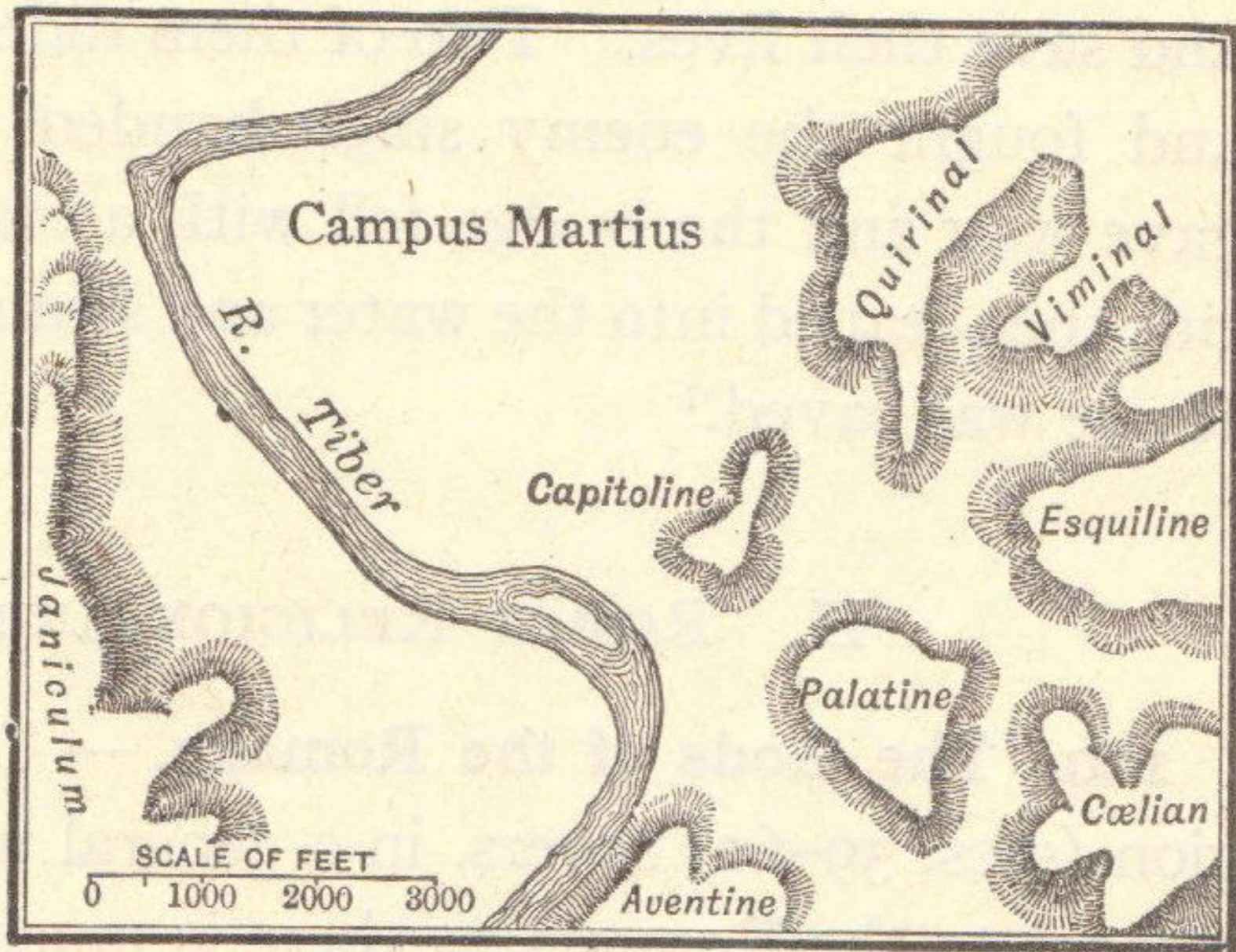
- Rome built on seven hills
- Alps
 - Barrier to the north
- Seas
 - Barriers on other three sides
- Poor harbors in eastern Italy
 - Little interference from cultures to the east

Unification of Italy under Rome

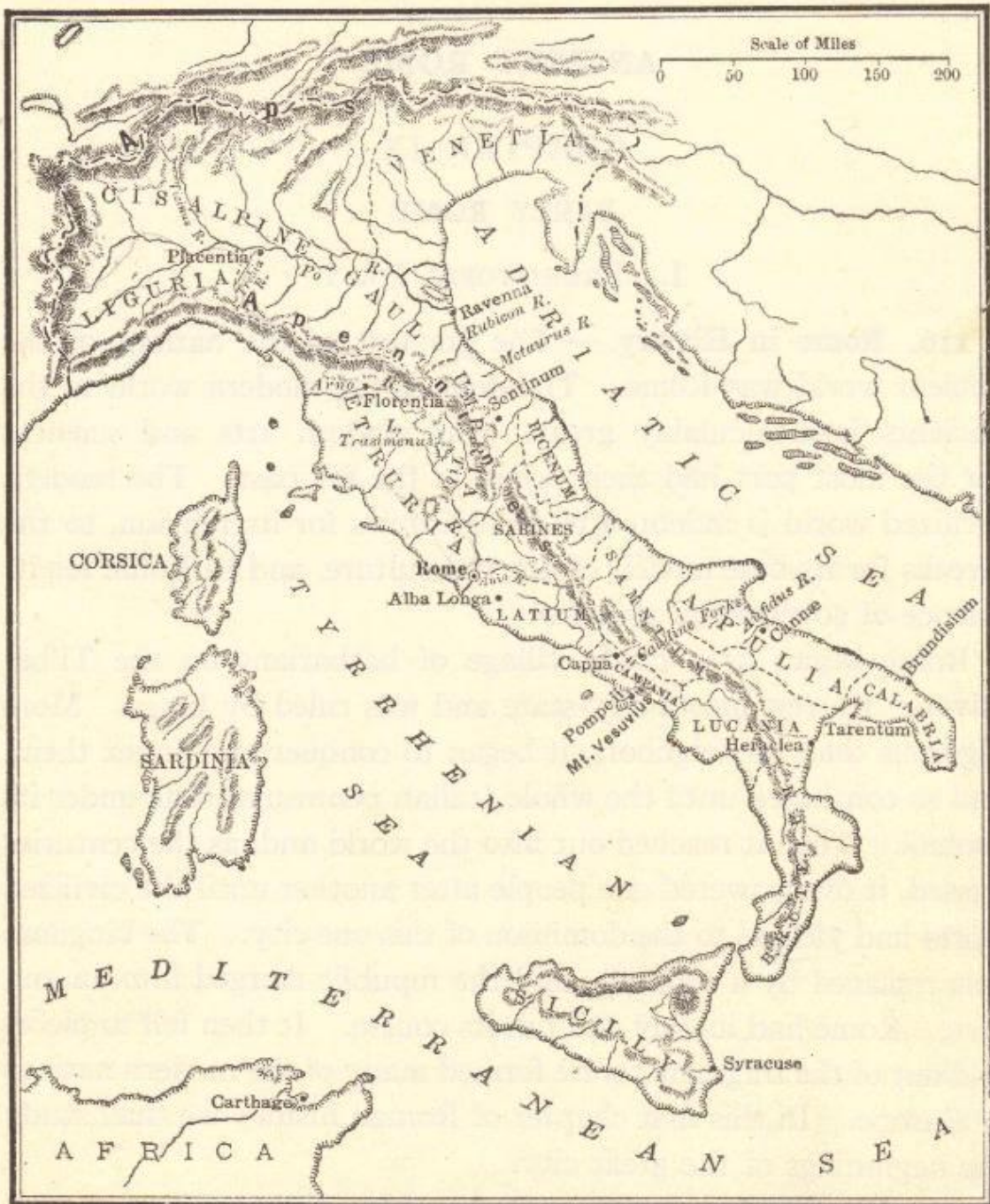
- Rome centrally located on peninsula
 - Good location for capital city
- Apennine Mountains run north-south
 - Not a barrier to unification of the peninsula

Farming and Trade

- Fertile soil and mild climate
 - Good for farming
 - No need to import foodstuffs
- Central location in Mediterranean
 - Good for trade
 - Launching point for expansion throughout Mediterranean region



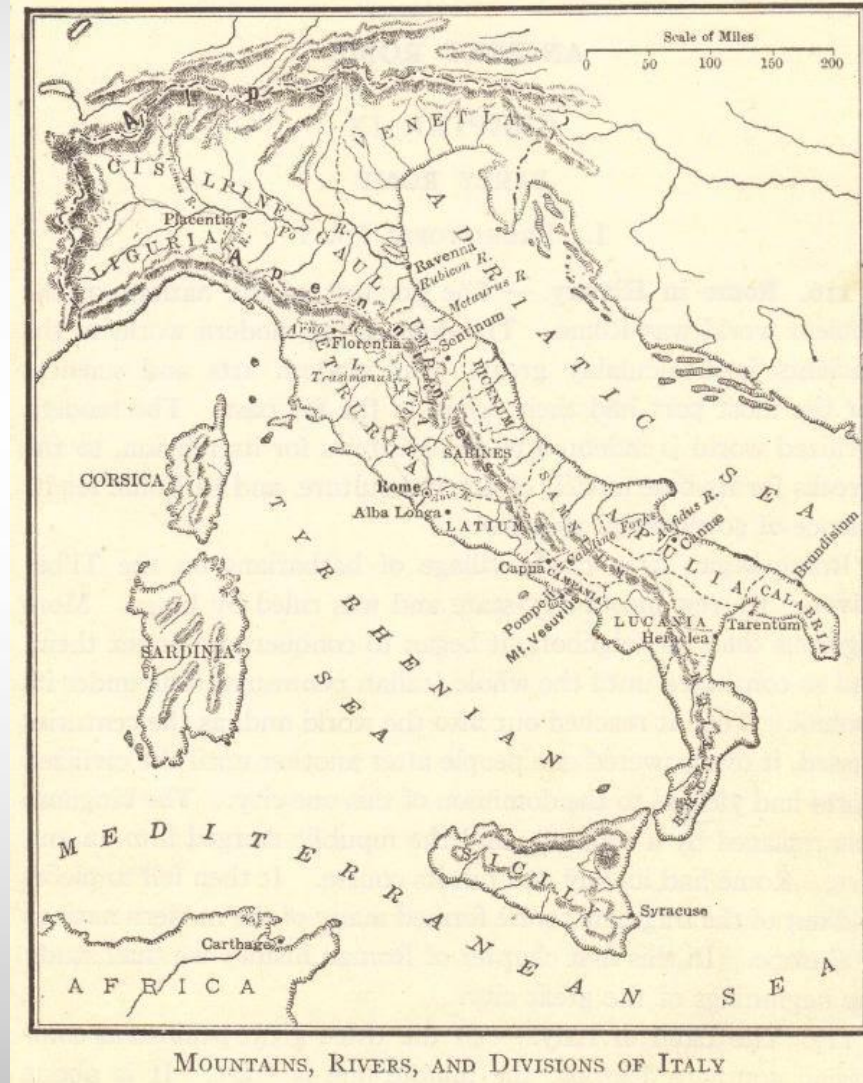
THE HILLS OF ROME



MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, AND DIVISIONS OF ITALY

Others Living in Italy

- Greek colonists
 - Eastern portion of Sicily
 - “Heel” and “toe” of Italy
- Carthaginian colonists
 - Western portion of Sicily
- Gauls
 - Between Alps and Po River



The Etruscans

- Mystery – their origins are lost to prehistory
 - Numerous hypotheses
 - Indigenous (first humans to live in region)
 - Migrated from east, north, or south, circa 1000 BCE
- Lived north of Rome
 - Region today called “Tuscany” after them (ancient Etruria)
 - Enemies of the Romans
- Taught the Romans:
 - Arch in architecture, drainage and sewer-building, phalanx military formation

The Latins

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

Three Major Periods of Roman History

Roman Origins

- Circa 1000-509 BCE
- Earliest settlements on Palatine Hill
- 753 BCE – Legendary founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus

Roman Republic

- 509-31 BCE
- Etruscan kings overthrown under leadership of Lucius Junius Brutus, the traditional founder of the Republic, in 509 BCE
- Republic = “thing of the people”
- Ended with Battle of Actium in 31 BCE

Roman Empire

- 31 BCE-476 CE
- Began when Octavian’s forces defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra
- End of Western Roman Empire traditionally dated to 476 CE, when last emperor, Romulus Augustus, deposed
- Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire continued until conquered by the Turks in 1453

Government: Patricians and Plebeians

Patricians

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

Plebeians

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

Other Elected Roman Officials

Aediles ran city (“local”) government.

Censors kept track of citizen lists, and in later years took charge of public morality.

Dictators, with absolute power, were elected by the Senate in times of emergency to rule for six months.

Praetors were in charge of administering justice.

Quaesters were in charge of Roman finances.

The Plebeians Earn Greater Rights: The Growth of Democracy in Rome

ASSEMBLY: Senate could no longer veto laws made by the Assembly (the “Comitia”).

INTERMARRIAGE: Plebeians were given the right to marry patricians.

PUBLIC OFFICES: These were opened to plebeians.

TRIBUNES: Right to elect **tribunes**. These were officials with veto (“I forbid”) power over the Senate.

TWELVE TABLES: Laws were written down. This protected plebeians from biased patrician judges. 450 B.C.E.

From Rome to Italy

- 509-265 B.C.E.
 - Rome came to control all of Italy south of the Po River
- 386 B.C.E.
 - Gauls from the north plundered and burned Rome
 - Rome got rid of the Gauls by paying them a large amount of gold
- Rome turned its direction from the Gauls and conquered:
 - The remaining Etruscans
 - Its former allies in the Latin League
 - Tribes in central Italy (such as the Samnites in 290 B.C.E.)
 - Greeks in the south

Why was Rome so successful?

Infrastructure: Well-built military roads radiating from Rome

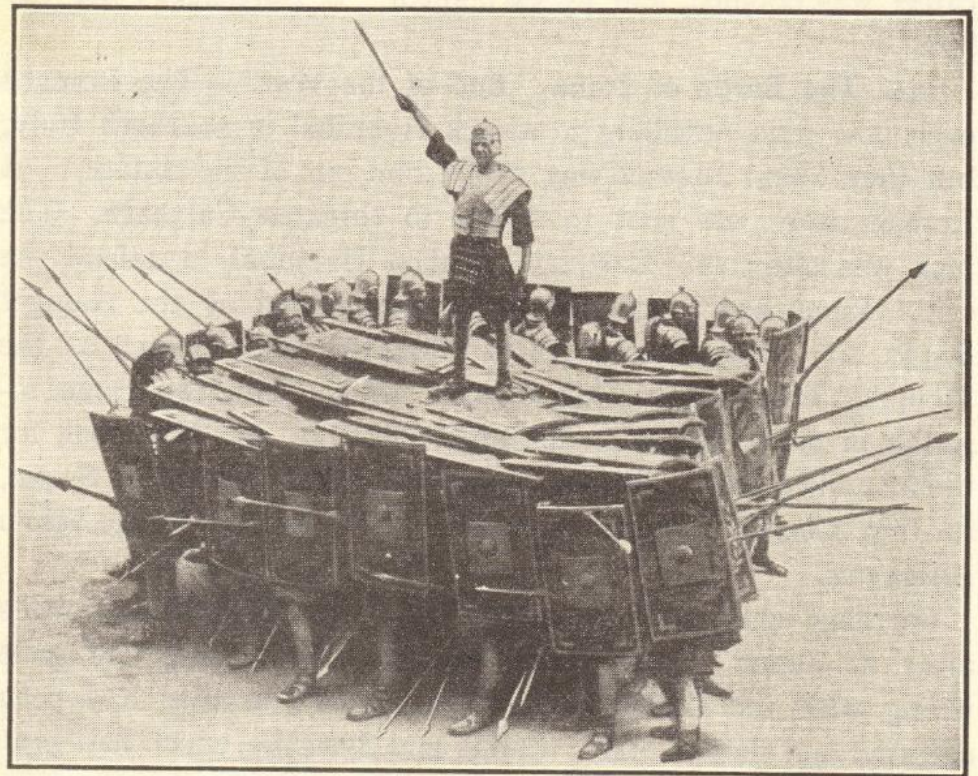
Military ability

Strategy: Divide and control

Treatment of conquered peoples

Military Ability

- Great soldiers
- Well-trained
- All volunteers

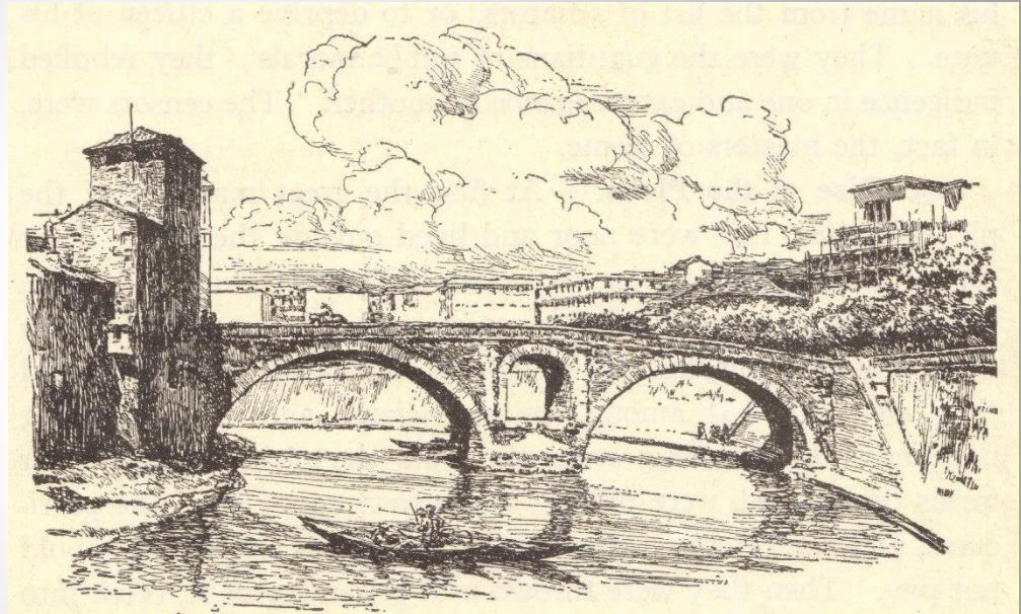


THE TORTOISE FORMATION — THE ANCIENT FORERUNNER OF THE
MODERN "TANK"

Posed by English guardsmen acting the part of Roman soldiers. When fortifications were attacked, the heavy-armed soldiers held their shields arranged in a formation known as the *testudo*, or tortoise, for protection from hostile weapons.

Infrastructure

- Few geographical barriers on the Italian peninsula
- Military roads radiated from Rome
 - Troops could be sent quickly to quell unrest in any area
 - Dual purpose—roads came to allow quick and easy travel by tax collectors, traders, travelers, and officials
- Famous roads
 - Appian Way
 - Flaminian Way
 - Valerian Way
- Public funds dedicated to building and maintaining the Republic's infrastructure



FABRICIAN BRIDGE OVER THE TIBER

The first bridge across the Tiber at Rome, built of wood, was the one defended by Horatius. Many bridges were built later, but the Fabrician, which unites the city with an island in the Tiber, is the oldest stone bridge in the world still in use.

Strategy: Divide and Control

- Rome's fear:
 - That allies and colonies would unite against Roman Rule
- Rome's solution:
 - Keep groups under Roman control disunited
- How it was done:
 - Forbade alliances between them
 - Separate privileges and treaties

Treatment of Conquered Peoples

- Conquered peoples were treated well
 - Some received full Roman citizenship, including suffrage
 - Some controlled their own affairs but paid tribute and gave soldiers to the Roman army
- Colonies
 - Rome established colonies in conquered areas, each protected by a garrison of Roman soldiers
 - Republic encouraged intermarriage
 - Led to the spread of Roman culture and language (Latin)

Review Questions

1. What are the geographical barriers of the Italian peninsula?
2. Apart from the Latins, what other groups lived in Italy?
3. According to tradition, who founded the Roman Republic in 509 BCE?
4. Who were the patricians, and what rights did they have?
5. Who were the plebeians, and what rights did they have?
6. Why was Rome so successful?