

## **Livy: The Early History of Rome, Book One, 1-13, 15-16, 57-59**

Titus Livius (59 BC – AD 17) wrote *Ab urbe condita*, a 142-volume history that went from the foundation of Rome in 753 BC to 9 BC. Although he seems to be generally accurate where he can be checked, he evidently relied almost exclusively on prior literary sources and rarely consulted archival documents. His chief concern was with style and dramatic effect.

It would therefore be difficult to prove that any of the events in the early pages of Book One are historical. We are in the world of myth and legend—and, quite possibly, of pure and simple fiction—but it is a world that illustrates characteristic Roman attitudes.

The translation is by Rev. Canon Roberts (copyright expired), found at [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu).

### **Aeneas Travels to Italy**

1. To begin with, it is generally agreed that after the capture of Troy, after the rest of the Trojans were massacred, the Greeks refused to continue to wage war against Aeneas and Antenor, partly owing to old ties of hospitality, and partly because these men had always been in favour of making peace and surrendering Helen. Their subsequent fortunes were different. Antenor sailed into the furthest part of the Adriatic, accompanied by a number of Eneitians who had been driven from Paphlagonia by a revolution and who, after losing their king Pylaemenes before Troy, were looking for a settlement and a leader. The combined force of Eneitians and Trojans defeated the Euganei, who dwelt between the sea and the Alps, and occupied their land. The place where they disembarked was called Troy, and the name was extended to the surrounding district; the whole nation were called Veneti.<sup>1</sup>

Similar misfortunes led to Aeneas becoming a wanderer but for him the Fates were preparing a higher destiny. He first visited Macedonia, then was carried down to Sicily in quest of a settlement; from Sicily he directed his course to the Laurentian territory.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, the name of Troy is found, and here the Trojans disembarked, and as their almost infinite wanderings had left them nothing but their arms and their ships, they began to plunder the neighborhood. The Aborigines,<sup>3</sup> who occupied the

country, with their king Latinus at their head came hastily together from the city and the country districts to repel the inroads of the strangers by force of arms.

From this point there is a twofold tradition. According to the one tradition, Latinus was defeated in battle, made peace with Aeneas, and subsequently a family alliance. According to the other tradition, while the two armies were standing ready to engage and waiting for the signal, Latinus advanced in front of his lines and invited the leader of the strangers to a conference. He inquired of him what manner of men they were, whence they came, what had happened to make them leave their homes, and what they were in quest of when they landed in Latinus' territory. When he heard that the men were Trojans, that their leader was Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Venus, that their city had been burnt, and that the homeless exiles were now looking for a place to settle in and build a city, he was so struck with the noble bearing of the men and their leader, and their readiness to accept alike either peace or war, that he gave his right hand as a solemn pledge of friendship for the future.

### **Aeneas' Alliance with the Latins and War with Turnus & Mezentius**

A formal treaty was made between the leaders and mutual greetings exchanged between the armies. Latinus received Aeneas as a guest in his house, and there, in the presence of his tutelary deities, completed the political alliance by a domestic one, and gave his daughter in marriage to Aeneas. This incident confirmed the Trojans in the

<sup>1</sup> This gives the aetiology of the Venetians.

<sup>2</sup> The district to the south of Rome.

<sup>3</sup> The native inhabitants of Italy.

hope that they had reached the end of their wanderings and had won a permanent home. They built a town, which Aeneas called Lavinium after his wife.<sup>4</sup> In a short time a boy was born of the new marriage, to whom his parents gave the name of Ascanius.

2. In a short time the native Italians and Trojans became involved in war with Turnus, the king of the Rutulians. Lavinia had been betrothed to him before the arrival of Aeneas, and, furious at finding a stranger preferred to him, he declared war against both Latinus and Aeneas. Neither side could congratulate themselves on the result of the battle; the Rutulians were defeated, but the victorious Aborigines and Trojans lost their leader Latinus.

Feeling the need of allies, Turnus and the Rutulians had recourse to the celebrated power of the Etruscans and Mezentius, their king, who was reigning at Caere, a wealthy city in those days.<sup>5</sup> From the first he had felt anything but pleasure at the rise of the new city, and now he regarded the growth of the Trojan state as much too rapid to be safe to its neighbors, so he welcomed the proposal to join forces with the Rutulians. To keep the Aborigines from abandoning him in the face of this strong coalition and to secure their well-being not only under the same laws, but also the same name, Aeneas called both nations by the common name of Latins. From that time the Aborigines were no less enthusiastic than the Trojans in their loyal devotion to Aeneas. So great was the power of Etruria that the renown of her people had filled not only the inland parts of Italy but also the coastal districts along the whole length of the land from the Alps to the Straits of Messina. Aeneas, however, trusting to the loyalty of the two nations who were day by day growing into one, led his forces into the field, instead of awaiting the enemy behind his walls. The battle resulted in

favor of the Latins, but it was the last mortal act of Aeneas. His tomb-- whatever it is lawful and right to call him-- is situated on the bank of the Numicius.<sup>6</sup> He is addressed as "Jupiter Indiges."<sup>7</sup>

### Ascanius & the Foundation of Alba

3. Aeneas' son Ascanius was not old enough to assume the government but his throne remained secure throughout his youth. During that interval --such was Lavinia's force of character--though a woman was regent, the Latin State, and the kingdom of his father and grandfather, were preserved unimpaired for her son.

I will not discuss the question-- for who could speak decisively about a matter of such extreme antiquity-- whether the man whom the Julian house claim, under the name of Iulus, as the founder of their name,<sup>8</sup> was this Ascanius or an older one than he, born of Creusa, whilst Ilium was still intact, and after its fall a sharer in his father's fortunes. This Ascanius--wherever he was born or of whatever mother (it is generally agreed in any case that he was the son of Aeneas)--left to his mother (or his stepmother) the city of Lavinium, which was for those days a prosperous and wealthy city, with a superabundant population, and built a new city at the foot of the Alban hills, which from its position, stretching along the side of the hill, was called "Alba Longa."<sup>9</sup> An interval of thirty years elapsed between the foundation of Lavinium and the colonization of Alba Longa. Such had been the growth of the Latin power, mainly through the defeat of the Etruscans, that neither at the death of Aeneas, nor during the regency of Lavinia, nor during the immature years of the reign of Ascanius, did either Mezentius and the Etruscans or any other of their neighbors venture to attack

<sup>4</sup> Latinus' daughter was Lavinia. Lavinium was about 45 miles south of Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Caere was about 30 miles north of Rome on the Tyrrhenian coast.

<sup>6</sup> A small stream near Lavinium.

<sup>7</sup> "Indiges" may mean "a god who is invoked."

<sup>8</sup> The "Julian house" was the family of Gaius Julius Caesar and the Emperor Augustus.

<sup>9</sup> About 40 miles southeast of Rome.

them. When terms of peace were being arranged, the river Albula, now called the Tiber, had been fixed as the boundary between the Etruscans and the Latins.

### Successors to Ascanius

Ascanius was succeeded by his son Silvius, who by some chance had been born in the forest.<sup>10</sup> He became the father of Aeneas Silvius, who in his turn had a son, Latinus Silvius. He planted a number of colonies: the colonists were called *Prisci Latini*.<sup>11</sup> The cognomen of Silvius was common to all the remaining kings of Alba, each of whom succeeded his father. Their names are Alba, Atys, Capys, Capetus, Tiberinus, who was drowned in crossing the Albula, and his name transferred to the river, which became henceforth the famous Tiber. Then came his son Agrippa, after him his son Romulus Silvius. He was struck by lightning and left the crown to his son Aventinus, whose shrine was on the hill which bears his name and is now a part of the city of Rome. He was succeeded by Proca, who had two sons, Numitor and Amulius. To Numitor, the elder, he bequeathed the ancient throne of the Silvian house. Violence, however, proved stronger than either the father's will or the respect due to the brother's seniority; for Amulius expelled his brother and seized the crown. Adding crime to crime, he murdered his brother's sons and made the daughter, Rhea Silvia, a Vestal virgin; thus, under the pretence of honoring her, deprived her of all hopes of having children.

### Birth and Upbringing of Romulus

4. But the Fates had, I believe, already decreed the origin of this great city and the foundation of the mightiest empire under heaven. The Vestal was forcibly violated and gave birth to twins. She named Mars as their father, either because she really believed it, or because the fault might appear less heinous if a deity were the cause of it. But neither

gods nor men sheltered her or her babes from the king's cruelty; the priestess was thrown into prison, the boys were ordered to be thrown into the river. By a heaven-sent chance it happened that the Tiber was then overflowing its banks, and stretches of standing water prevented any approach to the main channel. Those who were carrying the children expected that this stagnant water would be sufficient to drown them, so under the impression that they were carrying out the king's orders they exposed the boys at the nearest point of the overflow, where the Ficus Ruminalis<sup>12</sup> (said to have been formerly called Romularis) now stands. The locality was then a wild solitude. The tradition goes on to say that after the floating cradle in which the boys had been exposed had been left by the retreating water on dry land, a thirsty she-wolf from the surrounding hills, attracted by the crying of the children, came to them, gave them her teats to suck and was so gentle towards them that the king's flock-master found her licking the boys with her tongue. According to the story his name was Faustulus. He took the children to his hut and gave them to his wife Larentia to bring up. Some writers think that Larentia, from her unchaste life, had got the nickname of "She-wolf" (*lupa*) among the shepherds, and that this was the origin of the marvellous story. As soon as the boys, thus born and thus brought up, grew to be young men they did not neglect their pastoral duties but their special delight was roaming through the woods on hunting expeditions. As their strength and courage were thus developed, they used not only to lie in wait for fierce beasts of prey, but they even attacked brigands loaded with plunder. They distributed what they took to the shepherds, with whom, surrounded by a continually increasing body of young men, they associated themselves in their serious undertakings and in their sports and pastimes.

<sup>10</sup> The Latin word for forest is *silva*.

<sup>11</sup> "Old Latins."

<sup>12</sup> A fig-tree.

### **Romulus Recognized, Amulius Killed**

**5.** It is said that the festival of the Lupercalia, which is still observed, was even in those days celebrated on the Palatine hill. This hill was originally called Pallantium from a city of the same name in Arcadia; the name was afterwards changed to Palatium. Evander, an Arcadian,<sup>13</sup> had held that territory many ages before, and had introduced an annual festival from Arcadia in which young men ran about naked for sport and wantonness, in honour of the Lycaean Pan, whom the Romans afterwards called Inuus. The existence of this festival was widely recognised, and it was while the two brothers were engaged in it that the brigands, enraged at losing their plunder, ambushed them. Romulus successfully defended himself, but Remus was taken prisoner and brought before Amulius, his captors impudently accusing him of their own crimes. The principal charge brought against them was that of invading Numitor's lands with a body of young men whom they had got together, and carrying off plunder as though in regular warfare. Remus accordingly was handed over to Numitor for punishment. Faustulus had from the beginning suspected that it was royal offspring that he was bringing up, for he was aware that the boys had been exposed at the king's command and the time at which he had taken them away exactly corresponded with that of their exposure. He had, however, refused to divulge the matter prematurely, until either a fitting opportunity occurred or necessity demanded its disclosure. The necessity came first. Alarmed for the safety of Remus he revealed the state of the case to Romulus. It so happened that Numitor also, who had Remus in his custody, on hearing that he and his brother were twins, and comparing their ages, and the character and bearing so unlike that of one in a servile condition, began to recall the memory of his

<sup>13</sup> Evander came from Arcadia, the mountainous district in the Central Peloponnese.

grandchildren, and further inquiries brought him to the same conclusion as Faustulus; nothing was wanting to the recognition of Remus. So the king Amulius was being enmeshed on all sides by hostile purposes. Romulus shrunk from a direct attack with his body of shepherds, for he was no match for the king in open fight. They were instructed to approach the palace by different routes and meet there at a given time, while from Numitor's house Remus lent his assistance with a second band he had collected. The attack succeeded and the king was killed.

**6.** At the beginning of the fray, Numitor gave out that an enemy had entered the City and was attacking the palace, in order to draw off the Alban soldiery to the citadel, to defend it. When he saw the young men coming to congratulate him after the assassination, he at once called a council of his people and explained his brother's infamous conduct towards him, the story of his grandsons, their parentage and bringing up, and how he recognised them. Then he proceeded to inform them of the tyrant's death and his responsibility for it. The young men marched in order through the midst of the assembly and saluted their grandfather as king; their action was approved by the whole population, who with one voice ratified the title and sovereignty of the king. The Foundation of Rome

After the government of Alba was thus transferred to Numitor, Romulus and Remus were seized with the desire of building a city in the locality where they had been exposed. There was the superfluous population of the Alban and Latin towns, to these were added the shepherds: it was natural to hope that with all these Alba would be small and Lavinium small in comparison with the city which was to be founded.

### **Death of Remus**

These pleasant anticipations were disturbed by the ancestral curse--ambition--which led to a deplorable quarrel over what was at first a trivial matter. As they were twins and no claim

to precedence could be based on seniority, they decided to consult the tutelary deities of the place by means of augury as to who was to give his name to the new city, and who was to rule it after it had been founded. Romulus accordingly selected the Palatine as his station for observation, Remus the Aventine.

7. Remus is said to have been the first to receive an omen: six vultures appeared to him. The augury had just been announced to Romulus when double the number appeared to him. Each was saluted as king by his own party. The one side based their claim on the priority of the appearance, the other on the number of the birds. Then followed an angry altercation; heated passions led to bloodshed; in the tumult Remus was killed.

The more common report is that Remus contemptuously jumped over the newly raised walls and was forthwith killed by the enraged Romulus, who exclaimed, "So shall it be henceforth with every one who leaps over my walls." Romulus thus became sole ruler, and the city was called after him, its founder.

### **The Legend of Hercules & Cacus**

Romulus' first work was to fortify the Palatine hill where he had been brought up. The worship of the other deities he conducted according to the practice at Alba, but that of Hercules in accordance with the Greek rites as they had been instituted by Evander.

It was into this neighborhood, according to the tradition, that Hercules, after he had killed Geryon, drove his oxen, which were of marvellous beauty. He swam across the Tiber, driving the oxen before him, and wearied with his journey, lay down in a grassy place near the river to rest himself and the oxen, who enjoyed the rich pasture. When sleep had overtaken him, as he was heavy with food and wine, a shepherd living near, called Cacus, presuming on his strength, and captivated by the beauty of the oxen, determined to secure them. If he drove them before him into

the cave, their hoof-marks would have led their owner in his search for them in the same direction, so he dragged the finest of them backwards by their tails into his cave. At the first streak of dawn Hercules awoke, and on surveying his herd he saw that some were missing. He proceeded towards the nearest cave, to see if any tracks pointed in that direction, but he found that every hoof-mark led from the cave and none towards it. Perplexed and bewildered he began to drive the herd away from so dangerous a neighbourhood. Some of the cattle, missing those which were left behind, lowed as they often do, and an answering low sounded from the cave. Hercules turned in that direction, and as Cacus tried to prevent him by force from entering the cave, he was killed by a blow from Hercules' club, after vainly appealing for help to his comrades.

### **Evander Honors Hercules**

The king of the country at that time was Evander, a refugee from Peloponnesus, who ruled more by personal authority than by the exercise of power. He was looked up to with reverence for his knowledge of letters--a new and marvellous thing for uncivilized men--but he was still more revered because of his mother, who was believed to be a divine being and regarded with wonder, by all as an interpreter of Fate, in the days before the arrival of the Sibyl in Italy. This Evander, alarmed by the crowd of excited shepherds standing round a stranger whom they accused of open murder, ascertained from them the nature of his act and what led to it. As he observed the bearing and stature of the man to be more than human in greatness and august dignity, he asked who he was. When he heard his name, and learnt his father and his country, he said, "Hercules, son of Jupiter, hail! My mother, who speaks truth in the name of the gods, has prophesied that thou shalt join the company of the gods, and that here a shrine shall be dedicated to thee, which in ages to come the most powerful nation in all the world shall call their *Ara Maxima* and honour with thine own

special worship.” Hercules grasped Evander's right hand and said that he took the omen to himself and would fulfil the prophecy by building and consecrating the altar. Then a heifer of conspicuous beauty was taken from the herd, and the first sacrifice was offered; the Potitii and Pinarii, the two principal families in those parts, were invited by Hercules to assist in the sacrifice and at the feast which followed. It so happened that the Potitii were present at the appointed time and the entrails were placed before them; the Pinarii arrived after these were consumed and came in for the rest of the banquet. It became a permanent institution from that time that as long as the family of the Pinarii survived they should not eat of the entrails of the victims. The Potitii, after being instructed by Evander, presided over that rite for many ages, until they handed over this ministerial office to public servants after which the whole race of the Potitii perished. This, out of all foreign rites, was the only one which Romulus adopted, as though he felt that an immortality won through courage, of which this was the memorial, would one day be his own reward.

### **The Political Constitution**

8. After the claims of religion had been duly acknowledged, Romulus called his people to a council. As nothing could unite them into one political body but the observance of common laws and customs, he gave them a body of laws, which he thought would only be respected by a rude and uncivilized race of men if he inspired them with awe by assuming the outward symbols of power. He surrounded himself with greater state, and in particular he called into his service twelve lictors. Some think that he fixed upon this number from the number of the birds who foretold his sovereignty; but I am inclined to agree with those who think that as this class of public officers was borrowed from the same

people from whom the “*sella curulis*”<sup>14</sup> and the “*toga praetexta*”<sup>15</sup> were adopted--their neighbors, the Etruscans--so the number itself also was taken from them. Its use amongst the Etruscans is traced to the custom of the twelve sovereign cities of Etruria, when jointly electing a king furnishing him each with one lictor.

### **Open Immigration**

Meantime the City was growing by the extension of its walls in various directions--an increase due rather to the anticipation of its future population than to any present overcrowding. His next care was to secure an addition to the population that the size of the City might not be a source of weakness. It had been the ancient policy of the founders of cities to get together a multitude of people of obscure and low origin and then to spread the fiction that they were the children of the soil. In accordance with this policy, Romulus opened a place of refuge (*asylum*) on the spot where, as you go down from the Capitol, you find an enclosed space between two groves. A promiscuous crowd of freemen and slaves, eager for change, fled thither from the neighboring states. This was the first accession of strength to the nascent greatness of the city.

### **The Senate**

When he was satisfied as to its strength, his next step was to provide for that strength being wisely directed. He created a hundred senators; either, because that number was adequate, or because there were only a hundred heads of houses who could be created. In any case they were called the “*Patres*” in virtue of their rank, and their descendants were called “*Patricians*.”

### **The Rape of the Sabine Women**

9. The Roman State had now become so strong that it was a match for any of its neighbors in war, but its

<sup>14</sup> The “chariot seat”: the seat of the supreme magistrate when administering justice.

<sup>15</sup> The “bordered toga” worn by higher magistrates.

greatness threatened to last for only one generation, since through the absence of women there was no hope of offspring, and there was no right of intermarriage with their neighbours. Acting on the advice of the senate, Romulus sent envoys amongst the surrounding nations to ask for alliance and the right of intermarriage on behalf of his new community. It was represented that cities, like everything else, sprung from the humblest beginnings, and those who were helped on by their own courage and the favour of heaven won for themselves great power and great renown. As to the origin of Rome, it was well known that whilst it had received divine assistance, courage and self-reliance were not wanting. There should, therefore, be no reluctance for men to mingle their blood with their fellow-men.

Nowhere did the envoys meet with a favorable reception. Whilst their proposals were treated with insults, there was at the same time a general feeling of alarm at the power so rapidly growing in their midst. Usually they were dismissed with the question of whether they had opened an asylum for women, for nothing short of that would secure for them inter-marriage on equal terms. The Roman youth could ill brook such insults, and matters began to look like an appeal to force.

To secure a favorable place and time for such an attempt, Romulus, disguising his resentment, made elaborate preparations for the celebration of games in honour of "Equestrian Neptune," which he called "the *Consualia*." He ordered public notice of the spectacle to be given amongst the adjoining cities, and his people supported him in making the celebration as magnificent as their knowledge and resources allowed, so that expectations were raised to the highest pitch. There was a great gathering; people were eager to see the new City, all their nearest neighbors--the people of Caenina, Antemnae, and Crustumium--were there, and the whole Sabine population

came, with their wives and families.<sup>16</sup> They were invited to accept hospitality at the different houses, and after examining the situation of the City, its walls and the large number of dwelling-houses it included, they were astonished at the rapidity with which the Roman State had grown.

When the hour for the games had come, and their eyes and minds were alike riveted on the spectacle before them, the preconcerted signal was given and the Roman youth dashed in all directions to carry off the maidens who were present. The larger part were carried off indiscriminately, but some particularly beautiful girls who had been marked out for the leading patricians were carried to their houses by plebeians assigned to the task. One, conspicuous amongst them all for grace and beauty, is reported to have been carried off by a group led by a certain Talassius, and to the many inquiries as to whom she was intended for, the invariable answer was given, "For Talassius." Hence the use of this word in the marriage rites. Alarm and consternation broke up the games, and the parents of the maidens fled, distracted with grief, uttering bitter reproaches on the violators of the laws of hospitality and appealing to the god to whose solemn games they had come, only to be the victims of impious perfidy.

The abducted maidens were quite as despondent and indignant. Romulus, however, went round in person, and pointed out to them that it was all owing to the pride of their parents in denying right of intermarriage to their neighbors. They would live in honorable wedlock, and share all their property and civil rights, and--dearest of all to human nature--would be the mothers of free men. He begged them to lay aside their feelings of resentment and give their affections to those whom fortune had made masters of their persons. An injury had often led to reconciliation and love; they would find their husbands all

---

<sup>16</sup> The Sabines lived to the north and east of Rome.

the more affectionate because each would do his utmost, so far as in him lay to make up for the loss of parents and country. These arguments were reinforced by the endearments of their husbands who excused their conduct by pleading the irresistible force of their passion--a plea effective beyond all others in appealing to a woman's nature.

### War with the Neighboring Cities

**10.** The feelings of the abducted maidens were now pretty completely appeased, but not so those of their parents. They went about in mourning garb, and tried by their tearful complaints to rouse their countrymen to action. Nor did they confine their remonstrances to their own cities; they flocked from all sides to Titus Tatius, the king of the Sabines, and sent formal deputations to him, for his was the most influential name in those parts. The people of Caenina, Crustumium, and Antemnae were the greatest sufferers; they thought Tatius and his Sabines were too slow in moving, so these three cities prepared to make war conjointly. Such, however, were the impatience and anger of the Caeninensians that even the Crustuminians and Antemnates did not display enough energy for them, so the men of Caenina made an attack upon Roman territory on their own account. While they were scattered far and wide, pillaging and destroying, Romulus came upon them with an army, and after a brief encounter taught them that anger is futile without strength. He put them to a hasty flight, and following them up, killed their king and despoiled his body; then after slaying their leader took their city at the first assault. He was no less anxious to display his achievements than he had been great in performing them, so, after leading his victorious army home, he mounted to the Capitol with the spoils of his dead foe borne before him on a frame constructed for the purpose. He hung them there on an oak, which the shepherds looked upon as a sacred tree, and at the same time marked out the site for the temple of Jupiter, and addressing the god by a new title, uttered

the following invocation: "Jupiter Feretrius! these arms taken from a king, I, Romulus a king and conqueror, bring to thee, and on this domain, whose bounds I have in will and purpose traced, I dedicate a temple to receive the *spolia opima*<sup>17</sup> which posterity following my example shall bear hither, taken from the kings and generals of our foes slain in battle."

Such was the origin of the first temple dedicated in Rome. And the gods decreed that though its founder did not utter idle words in declaring that posterity would thither bear their spoils, still the splendor of that offering should not be dimmed by the number of those who have rivalled his achievement. For after so many years have elapsed and so many wars been waged, only twice have the *spolia opima* been offered. So seldom has Fortune granted that glory to men.

**11.** While the Romans were thus occupied, the army of the Antemnates seized the opportunity of their territory being unoccupied and made a raid into it. Romulus hastily led his legion against this fresh foe and surprised them as they were scattered over the fields. At the very first battle-shout and charge the enemy were routed and their city captured. While Romulus was exulting over this double victory, his wife, Hersilia, moved by the entreaties of the abducted maidens, implored him to pardon their parents and receive them into citizenship, for so the State would increase in unity and strength. He readily granted her request. He then advanced against the Crustuminians, who had commenced war, but their eagerness had been damped by the successive defeats of their neighbors, and they offered but slight resistance. Colonies were planted in both places; owing to the fertility of the soil of the Crustumine district, the majority gave their names for that colony. On the other hand there were numerous migrations to Rome, mostly of the

<sup>17</sup> The armor stripped from a slain general by the victor on a field of battle. (Lit. "rich booty.")



parents and relatives of the abducted maidens.

### **Tarpeia and the War with the Sabines**

The last of these wars was commenced by the Sabines and proved the most serious of all, for nothing was done in passion or impatience; they masked their designs till war had actually commenced. Strategy was aided by craft and deceit, as the following incident shows.

Spurius Tarpeius was in command of the Roman citadel. While his daughter had gone outside the fortifications to fetch water for some religious ceremonies, Tatius bribed her to admit his troops within the citadel. Once admitted, they crushed her to death beneath their shields, either that the citadel might appear to have been taken by assault, or that her example might be left as a warning that no faith should be kept with traitors. A further story runs that the Sabines were in the habit of wearing heavy gold armlets on their left arms and richly jeweled rings, and that the girl made them promise to give her "what they had on their left arms," accordingly they piled their shields upon her instead of golden gifts. Some say that in bargaining for what they had in their left hands, she expressly asked for their shields, and being suspected of wishing to betray them, fell a victim to her own bargain.

12. However this may be, the Sabines were in possession of the citadel. And they would not come down from it the next day, though the Roman army was drawn up in battle array over the whole of the ground between the Palatine and the Capitoline hill, until, exasperated at the loss of their citadel and determined to recover it, the Romans mounted to the attack. Advancing before the rest, Mettius Curtius, on the side of the Sabines, and Hostius Hostilius, on the side of the Romans, engaged in single combat. Hostius, fighting on disadvantageous ground, upheld the fortunes of Rome by his intrepid bravery, but at last he fell; the Roman line broke and fled to what

was then the gate of the Palatine. Even Romulus was being swept away by the crowd of fugitives, and lifting up his hands to heaven he exclaimed: "Jupiter, it was thy omen that I obeyed when I laid here on the Palatine the earliest foundations of the City. Now the Sabines hold its citadel, having bought it by a bribe, and coming thence have seized the valley and are pressing hitherwards in battle. Do thou, Father of gods and men, drive hence our foes, banish terror from Roman hearts, and stay our shameful flight! Here do I vow a temple to thee, 'Jove the Stayer,' as a memorial for the generations to come that it is through thy present help that the City has been saved."

Then, as though he had become aware that his prayer had been heard, he cried, "Back, Romans! Jupiter Optimus Maximus bids you stand and renew the battle." They stopped as though commanded by a voice from heaven; Romulus dashed up to the foremost line, just as Mettius Curtius had run down from the citadel in front of the Sabines and driven the Romans in headlong flight over the whole of the ground now occupied by the Forum. Mettius was now not far from the gate of the Palatine, and was shouting: "We have conquered our faithless hosts, our cowardly foes; now they know that to carry off maidens is a very different thing from fighting with men." In the midst of these vaunts Romulus, with a compact body of valiant troops, charged down on him. Mettius happened to be on horseback, so he was the more easily driven back, the Romans followed in pursuit, and, inspired by the courage of their king, the rest of the Roman army routed the Sabines. Mettius, unable to control his horse, maddened by the noise of his pursuers, plunged into a morass. The danger of their general drew off the attention of the Sabines for a moment from the battle; they called out and made signals to encourage him, so, animated to fresh efforts, he succeeded in extricating himself. Thereupon the Romans and Sabines renewed the fighting in the middle of the valley, but

the fortune of Rome was in the ascendant.

### **Peace and Union with the Sabines**

**13.** Then it was that the Sabine women, whose wrongs had led to the war, throwing off all womanish fears in their distress, went boldly into the midst of the flying missiles with dishevelled hair and rent garments. Running across the space between the two armies they tried to stop any further fighting and calm the excited passions by appealing to their fathers in the one army and their husbands in the other not to bring upon themselves a curse by staining their hands with the blood of a father-in-law or a son-in-law, nor upon their posterity the taint of parricide. "If," they cried, "you are weary of these ties of kindred, these marriage-bonds, then turn your anger upon us; it is we who are the cause of the war, it is we who have wounded and slain our husbands and fathers. Better for us to perish rather than live without one or the other of you, as widows or as orphans."

The armies and their leaders were alike moved by this appeal. There was a sudden hush and silence. Then the generals advanced to arrange the terms of a treaty. It was not only peace that was made, the two nations were united into one State, the royal power was shared between them, and the seat of government for both nations was Rome. After thus doubling the City, a concession was made to the Sabines in the new appellation of Quirites,<sup>18</sup> from their old capital of Cures. As a memorial of the battle, the place where Curtius got his horse out of the deep marsh on to safer ground was called the Curtian lake.

### **Death of Romulus**

*Under the rule of Romulus, Rome further secures her military and political position.*

**15.** These were the principal events at home and in the field that marked the reign of Romulus. Throughout—whether we consider the courage he showed in recovering his ancestral throne, or the wisdom he displayed in founding the City and adding to its strength through war and peace alike—we find nothing incompatible with the belief in his divine origin and his admission to divine immortality after death. It was, in fact, through the strength given by him that the City was powerful enough to enjoy an assured peace for forty years after his departure. He was, however, more acceptable to the populace than to the patricians but most of all was he the idol of his soldiers. He kept a bodyguard of three hundred men round him in peace as well as in war. These he called the "*Celeres*."

**16.** After these immortal achievements, Romulus held a review of his army at the "Caprae Palus" in the Campus Martius. A violent thunder storm suddenly arose and enveloped the king in so dense a cloud that he was quite invisible to the assembly. From that hour Romulus was no longer seen on earth. When the fears of the Roman youth were allayed by the return of bright, calm sun-shine after such fearful weather, they saw that the royal seat was vacant. Whilst they fully believed the assertion of the Senators, who had been standing close to him, that he had been snatched away to heaven by a whirlwind, still, like men suddenly bereaved, fear and grief kept them for some time speechless. At length, after a few had taken the initiative, the whole of those present hailed Romulus as "a god, the son of a god, the King and Father of the City of Rome." They put up supplications for his grace and favour, and prayed that he would be propitious to his children and save and protect them.

I believe, however, that even then there were some who secretly hinted that he had been torn limb from limb by the senators--a tradition to this effect, though certainly a very dim one,

<sup>18</sup> The Romans thus honor the Sabines and their capital of Cures by creating the word "Quirites," which came to be a Roman word for "citizen."

has filtered down to us. The other, which I follow, has been the prevailing one, due, no doubt, to the admiration felt for the man and the apprehensions excited by his disappearance. This generally accepted belief was strengthened by one man's clever device. The tradition runs that Proculus Julius, a man whose authority had weight in matters of even the gravest importance, seeing how deeply the community felt the loss of the king, and how incensed they were against the senators, came forward into the assembly and said: "Quirites! at break of dawn, to-day, the Father of this City suddenly descended from heaven and appeared to me. Whilst, thrilled with awe, I stood rapt before him in deepest reverence, praying that I might be pardoned for gazing upon him, 'Go,' said he, 'tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that my Rome should be the head of all the world. Let them henceforth cultivate the arts of war, and let them know assuredly, and hand down the knowledge to posterity, that no human might can withstand the arms of Rome.'"

It is marvellous what credit was given to this man's story, and how the grief of the people and the army was soothed by the belief which had been created in the immortality of Romulus.

*From ca. 750 BC until ca. 510 BC Rome was ruled by kings: Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, Tarquinius Superbus ("Tarquin the Proud"). This last had Servius Tullius killed; his arrogance would lead Romans to realize that kingship was not for them; Tarquin would be expelled and a Republic, with a senate, would replace it. But what triggered Tarquin's ouster was the fact that his son, Sextus, raped the wife of a respectable Roman.*

### **The Rape of Lucretia**

**57.** The royal princes sometimes spent their leisure hours in feasting and entertainments, and at a wine party given by Sextus Tarquinius at which Collatinus, the son of Egerius, was

present, the conversation happened to turn upon their wives, and each began to speak of his own in terms of extraordinarily high praise. As the dispute became warm Collatinus said that there was no need of words, it could in a few hours be ascertained how far his Lucretia was superior to all the rest. "Why do we not," he exclaimed, "if we have any youthful vigour about us mount our horses and pay your wives a visit and find out their characters on the spot? What we see of the behaviour, of each on the unexpected arrival of her husband, let that be the surest test." They were heated with wine, and all shouted: "Good! Come on!"

Setting spur to their horses they galloped off to Rome, where they arrived as darkness was beginning to close in; thence they proceeded to Collatia, where they found Lucretia very differently employed from the king's daughters-in-law, whom they had seen passing their time in feasting and luxury with their acquaintances. She was sitting at her wool work in the hall, late at night, with her, maids busy round her. The palm in this competition of wifely virtue was awarded to Lucretia. She welcomed the arrival of her husband and the Tarquins, whilst her victorious spouse courteously invited the royal princes to remain as his guests. Sextus Tarquin, inflamed by the beauty and exemplary purity of Lucretia, formed the vile project of effecting her dishonour. After their youthful frolic they returned for the time to camp.

**58.** A few days afterwards Sextus Tarquin went, unknown to Collatinus, with one companion to Collatia. He was hospitably received by the household, who suspected nothing, and after supper was conducted to the bedroom set apart for guests. When all around seemed safe and everybody fast asleep, he went in the frenzy of his passion with a naked sword to the sleeping Lucretia, and placing his left hand on her breast, said, "Silence, Lucretia! I am Sextus Tarquin, and I have a sword in my hand; if you utter a word, you shall die." When the woman, terrified out of her sleep, saw that no

help was near, and instant death threatening her, Tarquin began to confess his passion, pleaded, used threats as well as entreaties, and employed every argument likely to influence a female heart. When he saw that she was inflexible and not moved even by the fear of death, he threatened to disgrace her, declaring that he would lay the naked corpse of the slave by her dead body, so that it might be said that she had been slain in foul adultery.

By this awful threat, his lust triumphed over her inflexible chastity, and Tarquin went off exulting in having successfully attacked her honour. Lucretia, overwhelmed with grief at such a frightful outrage, sent a messenger to her father at Rome and to her husband at Ardea, asking them to come to her, each accompanied by one faithful friend; it was necessary to act, and to act promptly; a horrible thing had happened. Spurius Lucretius came with Publius Valerius, the son of Volesus; Collatinus with Lucius Junius Brutus, with whom he happened to be returning to Rome when he was met by his wife's messenger.

They found Lucretia sitting in her room prostrate with grief. As they entered, she burst into tears, and to her husband's inquiry whether all was well, replied, "No! what can be well with a woman when her honour is lost? The marks of a stranger, Collatinus, are in your bed. But it is only the body that has been violated, the soul is pure; death shall bear witness to that. But pledge me your solemn word that the adulterer shall not go unpunished. It is Sextus Tarquin, who, coming as an enemy instead of a guest forced from me last night by brutal violence a pleasure fatal to me, and, if you are men, fatal to him." They all successively pledged their word, and tried to console the distracted woman, by turning the guilt from the victim of the outrage to the perpetrator, and urging that it is the mind that sins not the body, and where there has been no consent there is no guilt.

**Lucretia's Suicide.** "It is for you," she said, "to see that he gets his

deserts: although I acquit myself of the sin, I do not free myself from the penalty; no unchaste woman shall henceforth live and plead Lucretia's example." She had a knife concealed in her dress which she plunged into her heart, and fell dying on the floor. Her father and husband raised the death-cry.

**59.** Whilst they were absorbed in grief, Brutus drew the knife from Lucretia's wound and holding it, dripping with blood, in front of him, said, "By this blood - most pure before the outrage wrought by the king's son--I swear, and you, O Gods, I call to witness that I will drive hence Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, together with his cursed wife and his whole brood, with fire and sword and every means in my power, and I will not suffer them or any one else to reign in Rome." Then he handed the knife to Collatinus and then to Lucretius and Valerius, who were all astounded at the marvel of the thing, wondering whence Brutus had acquired this new character. They swore as they were directed; all their grief changed to wrath, and they followed the lead of Brutus, who summoned them to abolish the monarchy forthwith. They carried the body of Lucretia from her home down to the Forum, where, owing to the unheard-of atrocity of the crime, they at once collected a crowd. Each had his own complaint to make of the wickedness and violence of the royal house.

Whilst all were moved by the father's deep distress, Brutus bade them stop their tears and idle laments, and urged them to act as men and Romans and take up arms against their insolent foes. All the high-spirited amongst the younger men came forward as armed volunteers, the rest followed their example. A portion of this body was left to hold Collatia, and guards were stationed at the gates to prevent any news of the movement from reaching the king; the rest marched in arms to Rome with Brutus in command. On their arrival, the sight of so many men in arms spread panic and confusion wherever they marched, but when again the people

saw that the foremost men of the State were leading the way, they realised that what-ever the movement was it was a serious one. The terrible occurrence created no less excitement in Rome than it had done in Collatia; there was a rush from all quarters of the City to the Forum. When they had gathered there, the herald summoned them to attend the "Tribune of the Celeres"; this was the office which Brutus happened at the time to be holding.

He made a speech quite out of keeping with the character and temper he had up to that day assumed. He dwelt upon the brutality and licentiousness of Sextus Tarquin, the infamous outrage on Lucretia and her pitiful death, the bereavement sustained by her, father, Tricipitinus, to whom the cause of his daughter's death was more shameful and distressing than the actual death itself. Then he dwelt on the tyranny of the king, the toils and sufferings of the plebeians kept underground clearing out ditches and sewers--Roman men, conquerors of all the surrounding nations, turned from warriors into artisans and stonemasons! He reminded them of the shameful murder of Servius Tullius and his daughter driving in her accursed chariot over her father's body, and solemnly invoked the gods as the avengers of murdered parents. By enumerating these and, I believe, other still more atrocious incidents which his keen sense of the present injustice suggested, but which it is not easy to give in detail, he goaded on the incensed multitude to strip the king of his sovereignty and pronounce a sentence of banishment against Tarquin with his wife and children.