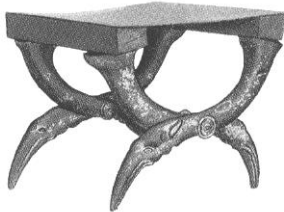


The Kings of Early Rome

Seven Legendary Kings Ruled Early Rome Before the Founding of the Republic in 509 B.C.

The early history of Rome has always been an interesting mixture of heroic legend and fact. Archaeological evidence indicates that there were people living on the Palatine and nearby hills prior to 1000 B.C. The Palatine is where one of the earliest Latin settlements grew up and later became the city of Rome. According to tradition, Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by Romulus, who became the first Roman king and gave his name to the city. Rome was ruled by seven legendary kings from 753 B.C. until 509 B.C. when Tarquin the Proud was overthrown by the Roman people and a republic was established. Because of the abuses of Tarquin, Romans always hated the very idea of a king and royalty. Even after the time of Augustus and other First Century A.D. emperors, none of these rulers dared call himself "King" for fear of raising the wrath and indignation of the Roman people. They simply went by the title of **Princeps**, meaning First Citizen or **Pater Patriae**, meaning Father of His Country.

The king would dress in a purple trimmed cloak and high - topped boots of red leather. He sat upon a throne of ivory known as a **curule chair**. These are often seen in relieves and on the reverse of coins and were constructed using crossed elephant tusks for legs. The kings



were accompanied by twelve lictors as he traveled about the city. The lictors each bore a **fascēs**, a bundle of rods which symbolized the power over life and death held by the King



of Rome. The axe symbolized the power to execute quickly and mercifully, while the rods symbolized the power to punish with beatings. Though the king was commander in time of war, chief priest, and judge, he did not have absolute power when it came to governing Rome. He needed the agreement of a governing body in order to make such important decisions as whether or not to go to war. The **Comitia Curiata** was formed of representatives from each of the **thirty curiae**, or groups of family clans. If approved by the Comitia Curiata, the act still had to be approved by the Senate, originally one hundred of Rome's wealthy men who served as advisors to the king.

The curious fact of Roman history is that no written records dating to before 350 B.C. have been found. After that time, records began to be kept by the priests, the Consuls' names were recorded, and laws were written down. Later three men, Ennius, Naevius and the famous historian Q. Fabius Pictor began to write histories based on ancient legends and their own records of current events. Because of this, the seven kings of Rome possess a status somewhere between legendary and historical. There probably were seven kings bearing these names, but the events ascribed to their reigns before Servius Tullius are probably legendary and allegorical in character. The following is a list of Rome's early kings and a brief description of the reign of each.

1st Romulus

(753 - 715 B.C.)



Romulus was the legendary founder of Rome. He occupies a unique place in Roman history. There is no archaeological or contemporary written legend to indicate that a real king named Romulus actually lived. One legendary event said to have taken place during the reign of Romulus was the **Rape of the Sabine Women**. About six months after Rome was founded, the Roman men discovered that they were having a difficult time finding wives. The citizens of surrounding towns did not want to betroth their daughters to the warlike Romans for fear that the Romans would become too powerful and conquer them. In desperation, the Romans kidnapped the young Sabine women at a festival, who did not seem to object too strongly to the idea! The Sabines declared war on the Romans to get their daughters back, but were not successful. Soon, they came to an accord. The Sabine fathers agreed to allow the Roman men to properly marry their daughters. Each Roman man gained a good, faithful wife. The Sabine fathers gained sons-in-law of hardy Roman stock, and a great wedding celebration was enjoyed by all.

As in all legendary events in Rome's history, there is a symbolic character to this tale. Rome was busily uniting the towns of Latium into a strong confederacy under her leadership that could withstand attack from other strong tribes in central Italy. The Rape of the Sabine Women symbolized the Roman desire to make alliances with neighboring towns, by invitation if possible. It also explained to later Romans why there were so many Romans families with Sabine names. This type of legend or myth is called “**etiological**”. An etiological legend/myth is one that explains obvious, present day facts by creating a story about the past.

2nd Numa Pompilius

(715 to 673 B.C.)

Numa Pompilius was the king who established the priesthoods and religious institutions of the Romans. Among them were the **Cult of Vesta** (Vestal Virgins), who chiefly guarded the eternal flame, the **Salii** (Leaping Priests) who danced in rhythmic unison while carrying the sacred shields, one of which fell from heaven, and the **Pontifex Maximus**, the chief religious figure who saw to it that the other priesthoods performed their duties properly. He also



built the temple of Jupiter Elicius on the Aventine hill. His name is Etruscan, although he is said to have been a Sabine. He reformed the calendar, adding two extra months to the ten-month calendar and established fixed dates for religious festivals. The addition of the two extra months never caught on and the idea had to be re-introduced by Julius Caesar in the 1st century B.C. He was famous for visiting a sacred grotto where he would speak to the goddess Egeria. Under his reign, Rome became known to its neighbors as a community dedicated to worship and peace, whereas they had been seen under Romulus as little more



than an armed military camp. He reigned for forty-three years. His reign was a peaceful one compared with that of Tullius Hostilius who succeeded him.

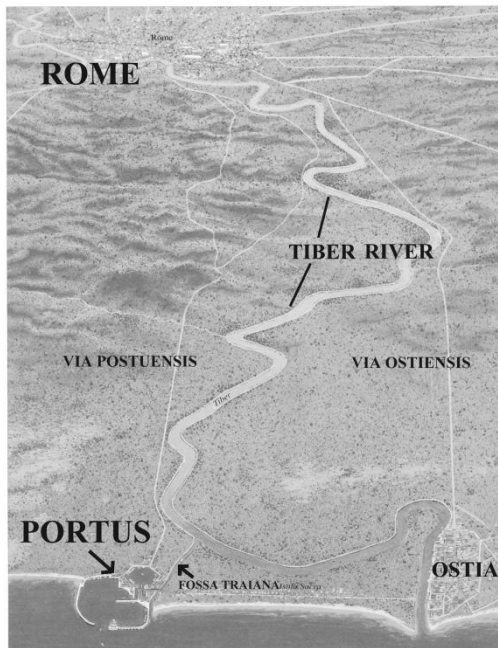
3rd Tullus Hostilius (673 - 642 B.C.)

Tullus Hostilius was famous for his warlike exploits. His warlike character stands in contrast to the religious emphasis of King Numa's reign. He was embarrassed by how soft and effeminate the Romans had become under Numa and was determined to reinvigorate the Roman military tradition that had flourished under Romulus. He conquered much surrounding territory and added it to the growing area of land ruled by Rome. During his reign a long, drawn-out war was fought between Rome and Alba Longa. Both Rome and Alba Longa were descended from Trojan stock. So this conflict amounted to a civil war. Rome eventually won and vanquished her rival city. The famous story of the **Horatii and the Curatii** took place during this war. Two sets of triplets, the Roman Horatii and the Alba Longan Curatii were set against each other in a fight to the death, the winners bringing total victory for their side. The reign of Tullus Hostilius symbolizes the ambitious and warlike nature of the Roman people.



4th Ancus Marcius (641 - 616 B.C.)

Ancus Marcius felt that his predecessor Hostilius had gone too far in turning the Romans away from Numa's emphasis on religious matters and determined to reverse their warlike attitudes.



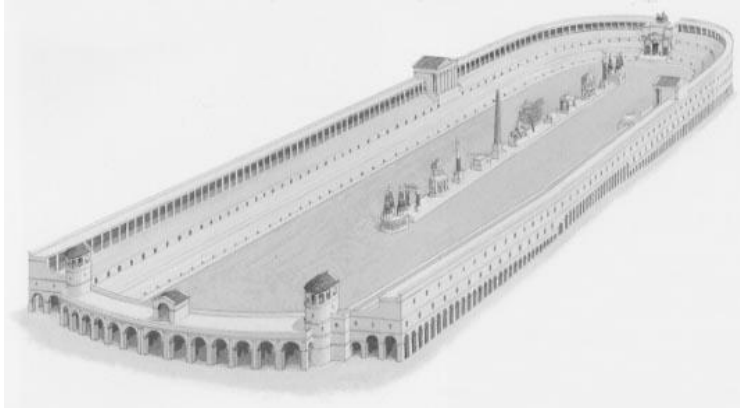
He tried to infuse religion into the military by establishing the “**ius fetiale**” (fetial law). This law forbade the Romans to fight any but defensive wars upon their neighbors and then only after the offending city had been duly warned. Thinking that Ancus was another Numa, the neighboring Latin cities were first relieved but soon saw an opportunity to regain some of the territory they had lost to the Romans. They soon found that Ancus had a good amount of Romulus in him also. He fought with and defeated many Latin communities who were brought under the sway of Rome.

Ancus also conquered land from the Etruscans, particularly the town of **Ostia** at the Tiber's mouth where he founded salt works. He also built the **Pons Sublicius**, the first bridge across the Tiber River. He increased the city limits, by adding the **Janiculum Hill** that lay across the Tiber to accommodate the growing population of Rome. The growth in population also brought increased crime so Ancus built the first prison (*carcer*) in Rome. He reigned for twenty-four years.

5th Lucius Tarquinius Priscus

(616 - 579 B.C.)

Originally named Lucumo, Tarquinius Priscus was the son of a Corinthian immigrant who



settled in the Etruscan city of Tarquinium. He came to Rome as a young man and became rich and influential. He was so successful and popular that he was named the guardian of the king's children. When Ancus died he was chosen as Rome's next king. Tarquinius brought Etruscan customs, cults and craftsmen to Rome. He built the **Capitoline Triad** temples. He made the celebration of games an annual event

The Cicus Maximus

and began the foundations of what would become the **Circus Maximus**, the great stadium where Romans held chariot races. Priscus successfully waged wars against the Latins and the Sabines. He improved the city by making grants of land to private citizens for the building of shops and businesses. He also drained the swamps that surrounded the Forum. He was murdered at the instigation of the sons of Ancus Marcius. His daughter married the next king, Servius Tullius.



The Capitoline Triad, commonly called the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, contained temples to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, the three most important deities

6th Servius Tullius

(578 - 535 B.C.)

Servius was of Latin origin. His mother was a slave woman who lived in the palace of Tarquinius Priscus. He came to the attention of the royal family when it was said that as a child his head caught on fire while he was sleeping but did not harm the boy in any way. He became the favorite of Tarquinius Priscus and this led to the assassination of the king by sons of Ancus who were enraged at the thought that the son of a slave woman would succeed the throne rather than themselves who were the children of a king. Traditionally, he is credited with the political re-organization of Rome, dividing the population into different classes based on wealth. These classes were then divided into **centuries** that were used to organize the population in elections. This organization, which required an exact counting of the citizens and the recording of each citizen's property was unique in the ancient world and is credited with establishing the foundations of a system that allowed Rome to grow and surpass all other civilizations in the Mediterranean. He also is credited with building and extending the walls of Rome. Servius met the fate of his predecessor. His reign was cut short by assassination. He ruled for forty-four years.

The Centuriate Assembly and Classes of Military Service

One of the reforms of Servius Tullius included a new governing body based on classes of military service. The size of the army was increased and the warriors were drawn from different property classes of the wealthier citizens. Originally, a man was either of the class (from the Latin *classis* or calling), meaning he could afford to equip himself with the full armor and weapons of a hoplite warrior, or he was "below the class", or (*infra classem*), in which case he could not afford to equip himself as a hoplite. Eventually, this system was expanded to include five classes of military service plus the *equites* or cavalry, and an additional group containing musicians and engineers. The army was composed of a certain number of centuries, or groups of one hundred men from each class. These men were drawn from those of military age from each property class. These centuries also formed the voting units of the new popular assembly called the **Centuriate Assembly**. Since the Centuriate Assembly was a political body based on military service and not merely a military organization in and of itself, some means had to be provided to include the elders of the community. These were the men beyond the maximum active duty military age of forty-five years. So, an equal number of senior centuries and junior centuries from each class were incorporated into the Centuriate Assembly.

According to the Roman historian Livy, the levies of centuries from the various classes were organized as follows:

The **First Class** consisted of wealthy citizens, the value of whose property **exceeded 100,000 asses**. The First Class contributed forty centuries of juniors (of military age) and forty centuries of seniors. The juniors of the First Class were required to supply themselves with a bronze helmet, round **parma** style shield, bronze breastplate, bronze greaves (shin armour), short sword and spear.

The property requirements of the **Second Class** were **75,000 to 100,000 asses** and they contributed ten centuries of juniors and ten centuries of seniors. Their equipment was the same as that of the First Class hoplites except they were not required to have a breastplate and the shield could be of the square type that was later to evolve into the **scutum**.

The **Third Class** had to **possess 50,000 asses** worth of property and were equipped like the Second Class hoplites with the exception that they were not required to wear greaves. They also supplied ten centuries each of juniors and seniors.

The **Fourth Class** property requirements were **25,000 asses** and ten centuries each of juniors and seniors were recruited from them. The Fourth Class warriors carried only a spear and a javelin.

The **Fifth Class** property requirements were **11,000 asses**. They were equipped only with slings and were used as skirmishers. Thirty centuries total were drawn from the Fifth Class, which included juniors and seniors.

Four centuries of specialized troops were raised from among the classes, two centuries of engineers and two centuries of musicians. Ancient sources differ on which classes supplied the engineers and musicians, as well as some minor details concerning equipment.

All the rest of the citizens of Rome were not deemed to be of any property class. They were called “infra classem”, or, below the class. From these was drawn one century that was exempt from military service.

In addition to the centuries levied from the five propertied classes and one century from the classless citizens, eighteen centuries of cavalry were recruited from amongst the wealthiest Roman citizens.

In all, the Centuriate Assembly consisted of 193 voting centuries. Voting was first done within the centuries, and then the vote of each century was taken until a majority had either voted for or against the issue under consideration. The votes were first taken from the eighteen cavalry centuries, then the centuries from the upper classes, and finally the lower classes voted in their turn. This system was not really fair, because sometimes the lower classes did not even get to vote if the wealthier classes and the cavalry centuries sided together, as sometimes happened.

The Centuriate Assembly had the power to declare war and to appoint men to the more important magistracies, including the consuls. They also voted on laws proposed to them by the more important magistrates. The laws voted on and appointments made by the Centuriate Assembly, however, had to be ratified by the Senate.

7th Tarquinius Superbus (534 - 510 B.C.)

The last of the Tarquins to rule Rome was Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. His name translates in English as “Tarquin the Proud”. He was the oldest son of Tarquinius Priscus and along with his brother Aruns had been left in the care of Servius Tullius upon their father’s death. Servius had arranged for two of his daughters to marry them in order to prevent any trouble from the two princes in the future. This, however, did not work. One of Servius’ daughters, Tullia, was as ambitious as Lucius but had been married to the other brother. Soon Lucius and Tullia murdered their spouses and



married each other. They eventually plotted and successfully overthrew Servius and had him murdered. One famous story tells of Tullia riding home in a chariot from the coup and running over the body of her dead father who had been thrown in the street. The reign of Tarquinius Superbus was as bloody and ruthless as its beginning. Through murder and deception he managed to usurp total control of Rome. He forced freeborn citizens to do menial labor, oppressed, robbed, and murdered the Roman nobility and ignored the advice and direction of the senate and the Comitia Curia. Before long Tarquinius was hated by nearly the entire population. When a well-respected and virtuous Roman noblewoman named Lucretia was raped by Tarquinius’ son Sextus and then committed suicide because she couldn’t bear the shame the Roman populous exploded in a rage of anger.

The **Rape of Lucretia**, led to the king’s expulsion and the establishment of the Republic in 509 B. C.

1. When was Rome founded? _____
2. Where was the earliest settlement at Rome? _____
3. What were three symbols of a king's authority? _____

4. What does "princeps" mean? _____
5. What does "pater patriae" mean? _____
6. How many tribes were there? _____
7. What is the date of the earliest Roman records? _____
8. Who were the first Romans to write histories based on ancient Roman legends?

9. What were the two governing bodies in Rome during the regal period?

10. Who were the senators? _____
11. What is an "etiological" legend/myth? _____
12. What is Numa best remembered for? _____
13. What was Tullus Hostilius's main ambition when he became king?

14. Who were the Horatii and Curatii? _____

15. What was the "ius fetiale"? _____

16. What did Tarquinius Priscus bring to Rome? _____

17. What were four of Ancus Marcius' accomplishments?

18. What were Servius Tullius' greatest accomplishments? _____

19. How much wealth did a citizen of the first class need? _____

20. How much wealth did a citizen of the fifth class need? _____

21. What kind of ruler was Tarquinius Superbus? _____

22. Who was the last king of Rome? _____

23. What does Tarquinius Superbus' name mean? _____

24. When was the last king expelled from Rome? _____

25. Why did the Romans expel this king? _____

List the seven kings of Rome.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

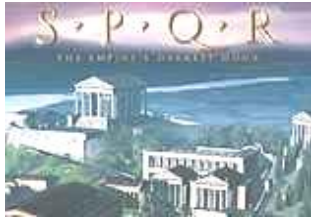
4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

Draw a picture for each Roman king in the order of their reigns which represents one of their achievements and could be easily identified with that king by anyone who read the reading. Write the name of each king at the bottom of each picture.



7

5

3

B

C

1st _____

2nd _____

3rd _____

4th _____

5th _____

**5
0
9

B
C**

6th _____

7th _____