

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Rise of Rome to 264 BC

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*John Serrati*

Now I will set forth the glory that awaits the Trojan race, the illustrious souls of the Italian heirs to our name. I will teach you your destiny... Under [Romulus'] auspices, my son, Rome's empire will encompass the Earth, its glory will rival Olympus... This will be your destiny, Roman, to rule the world with your power. These will be your arts: to establish peace, to spare the humbled, and to conquer the proud.

By the time Vergil put these words into the mouth of Anchises as he showed his son Aeneas the glories that awaited his lineage, Rome controlled the entire Mediterranean and had already established itself as one of history's leading imperial states. In the last decades of the first century, though in all likelihood going back to Cicero, there was a belief among some Romans that it was their destiny to rule an empire, that they had not become so powerful simply by happenstance but because conquest was somehow part of their psyche, and that early on in their history they were marked out as different, even gifted, when it came to the art of war. It has recently been argued that at no point in its history was the Roman Republic ever markedly more aggressive or imperialistic than contemporary states, yet it is unlikely that Rome owed the empire of Cicero or Vergil's times merely to the might of its legions.<sup>1</sup>

By the fourth century Rome was almost certainly militarized to a far greater extent than any of its neighbors, and within a short time a hypercompetitive, aggressive, and warlike nobility would emerge as leaders of the state, while the classes that made up the common soldiery themselves favored war due to the plunder which it provided. These elements fused with Latin manpower in 338 in a settlement that gave the Romans unmatched resources of human capital. It should therefore be seen as no coincidence that serious conquest and warfare began in the fourth century; this was the era that laid the foundations of

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the large-scale conquests that were to come post-264. In fact, it would not be an overstatement to say that by the dawn of the third century, warfare must be seen as a binding force in Roman society, and Rome itself had become a state socialized to make war.

Yet what is equally clear is that it was not always this way. The city that existed prior to the fourth century appears in no way extraordinary in comparison to many of its peers on the peninsula. It likely began around the *forum Boarium* area as an *emporion* for salt from the mouth of the Tiber. Several hill-top villages developed in the area (tenth to ninth centuries) and in the eighth century began to coalesce into one settlement that centered on the Palatine, Capitoline, and the new common area of the Forum. At some point the region fell under the dominance of a series of warlords or tyrants, whom the later Romans called kings, but these fell eventually to an aristocracy that had been gaining power for some time and established an oligarchy in the late sixth century. Even at this stage, there appears to have been nothing atypical about Rome, beyond the fact that it was by now the largest urban centre in Latium. Nevertheless within a little more than a hundred years Rome did emerge as a highly aggressive military state. The process by which the city went from village to the brink of empire forms the central theme of this chapter.

## Pre-Republican Rome

The belief that Rome was predestined to rule an empire perhaps goes back even further than Cicero to Marcus Terentius Varro in the first century, who more than anyone else is responsible for the canonization of early Roman history. But he was not the first to look into Rome's distant past: the earliest writers to mention the city are, perhaps unsurprisingly, Greek. Hellanicus in the fifth century first seized upon the lines from the *Iliad* (20.302–305) that predicted the survival of Aeneas; he then had the Trojan hero go west and eventually found Rome. Other Greek writers, such as Damastes, repeated the story, while Alcimus in the fourth century first connected it with Romulus, the native eponymous founder of Rome, whom he made Aeneas' son. Timaeus, Antigonus, and finally the Roman historian Fabius Pictor expanded greatly on these themes in the third century; by the second century, Roman antiquarians were at pains to establish a legitimate connection between the Trojan Aeneas and the Roman Romulus. The former became the distant ancestor of the latter, who went on to found Rome—according to Varro, whose date became the most accepted—in 753.<sup>2</sup>

Remus does not seem to have been part of the early narrative — indeed, amongst ancient cities Rome is quite unique in having two founders — and only makes an appearance in the late fourth or early third century when the

Greek chronicler Diocles incorporated the twins into his work on the foundation of Rome, and when, in 296 specifically, the brothers Ogulnii as curule aediles set up the very first statue in Rome of Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf.<sup>3</sup> Various reasons have been speculated for his late arrival. For example, the philological: “Rumlnas” and “Remne” as the names of two Etruscan *gentes* who once dominated the area that was to become Rome and ruled over the Latins there. Their names were rendered into Latin as Romilius and Remmius (a fifth-century *gens* Romilia Vaticana does appear to have existed). The Romilii either defeated or absorbed the Remmii, hence Romulus killing Remus, and therefore gave their name to the entire area. The political: Romulus’ murder of Remus illustrates the early Roman dominance of the Sabines. Or the imperial: Romulus and Remus symbolize Rome and Capua in their joint rule of Italy in the fourth and third centuries.<sup>4</sup>

However, it is far likelier that the twins represent either patricians and plebeians or the joint consulship perhaps created in 367 (see below), or indeed both, for from 342 onwards plebeians began to hold at least one consulship regularly. Much evidence supports this: first, a tradition in some sources that Remus was a self-sacrificing hero whose blood, albeit spilt by his brother or on Romulus’ order, purified the city walls to make Rome hallowed ground. Furthermore, fourth-century and early third-century objects depicting both being suckled by a she-wolf confirm that in some versions Remus survived and ruled with Romulus; some literary sources also imply this.<sup>5</sup>

By Varro’s time, the mid first century, the myth of Romulus and Remus and the latter’s murder was believed to have happened in 753. It is unsurprising that Varro arrived at this date; as with the Olympic Games beginning in 776, oral history and memory only appear to have gone back to the mid eighth century by the time the first histories were being written. The Varronian date, however, is not borne out by archaeology, which has revealed activity from the fifteenth century and permanent occupation from the tenth. On a natural bend in the Tiber, the area featured well-irrigated agricultural lands and nearby salt flats, probably the main reason that people permanently settled the place at the outset. The easily fordable Tiber made the location also a way-station for trade between the Etruscan north and the Campanian south. Thus, at an early date the settlement came into contact with a host of foreign peoples and influences, from Phoenicians to Etruscans, Campanians, Greeks, and Carthaginians.<sup>6</sup>

The site was supposedly chosen by Romulus because it featured seven hills, although the local topography has to be quite generously manipulated – and undoubtedly was by antiquarians – in order to arrive at this number. Nonetheless, earliest Rome perhaps did encompass seven villages, as remembered via the *Septimontium* (Festival of the seven mounts) that took place annually on 11 December in historical times when ceremonies were held not

on each of the canonical seven hills, but at the sites of the seven prehistoric villages that existed on just three: Germalus and Palatium on the Palatine; Velia at the foot of the Palatine, near one entrance to the future *forum Romanum*; Querquetulanus on the Caelian; and Oppius, Fagutal, and Cispius on the Esquiline. This festival as a whole, and its recognition of the Palatine's two villages, likely originated in and represents a proto-urban phase in the development of Rome; a time before the eighth century. The existence of a wall between Germalus and Palatium may indicate that these places at times even fought one another.<sup>7</sup>

As with the number seven, later Romans may also have been onto something with the date 753. While it certainly does not represent the city's foundation, in the eighth century the first hints of a synoecism are found and the villages apparently coalesce gradually into a single urban settlement. This period sees a greater amount of luxury goods, many of them Greek, coming into the area. Rome's first aristocracy are now displaying their wealth and beginning to utilize chamber tombs. In the decades to come, the first permanent houses, undoubtedly belonging to this same upper class, would be built. By the third quarter of the eighth century the settlement was probably united by the construction of an earthen wall, making it likely that the villages first came together for collective defence.

The existence of such a defensive work, however, has yet to be proven. The first site that we know with certainty to have been communal is the Forum, lying between the Velia, the Palatine and the Capitoline. Votive deposits on the latter indicate that it too came into communal religious use within a few decades of the Forum area being cleared in the mid seventh century, and within the same period was perhaps home to a wooden temple. The Forum itself probably first served as a central meeting place and market. Within a few decades it was expanded to create the first *comitium*, most likely for the *comitia calata* (called assembly) which, as the name suggests, was a gathering of all citizens to hear proclamations from the government as well as the announcement of the *kalendae* and the coming festival days.<sup>8</sup>

Though it is impossible to say with certainty, early Roman society appears to have been organized on the basis of clans or *gentes* (singular *gens*); units comprising multiple families who were not necessarily related to the wealthier families in control at the top. All Romans seem to have belonged to this structure and, like Scottish clans, each *gens* member, whether related or not, took the name of the top family. Thus by the eighth century each Roman had two names, his own and that of his *gens*, and within a couple of hundred years, as the *gentes* grew in size, larger units began to break away forming new clans, until by the sixth century most aristocrats had three names. Moreover, high-ranking members of a *gens* would have large groups of retainers (*sodales*; singular *sodalis*; archaic *suodalis*, *suodales*); not only is this almost certainly the

origin of the later patron-client system in Rome, but is also likely to have been that of several, if not all, of Rome's kings as many of these groups acted as war-bands. While some of these formed Rome's earliest armies, others appear to have aggressively engaged in raiding and at times even conquest. The phenomenon of war-bands was frequently found in Etruscan society as well. Therefore, the "monarchical" period, which later Romans believed lasted from the mid eighth until the late sixth century, in all likelihood represents a time of rule by a series of local and foreign leaders heading *gens*-based war-bands who had either taken the city by force or reached a concordat with the population where their rule was exchanged for protection.<sup>9</sup>

This theory is buttressed by several points. Firstly, the kingship in Rome was not in any way hereditary, and, even if we are generous and add the other leaders of whom we know from this period — Titus Tatius, the brothers Vibenna, Mastarna, and Lars Porsenna — to the canonical list of seven Roman kings, 250 years is far too long a period for 12 men to have ruled in unbroken succession, and thus large gaps are likely to have existed between reigns. Moreover, Mastarna is not an actual name but an Etruscan title meaning *magister* or leader, in all likelihood in a military context: perhaps merely the title of either Caeles or Aulus Vibenna, brothers who certainly headed war-bands and probably conquered and ruled Rome at some point in the sixth century, or of the Roman king Servius Tullius, who one tradition claims was a *suodalis* of Caeles. Finally, these roving war-bands continued to exist well into the fifth century, fighting private wars and attempting to conquer small settlements, including Rome.

Therefore, while later Romans pictured their early kings more along the lines of Hellenistic rulers, and while the deeds of certain monarchs are doubtless mythological, there does appear to have been a significant period in Rome's early history where the city was under the rule of a succession of individuals at the head of powerful war-bands. Some of these certainly, as the legends state, did build up the settlement to the point where it might be described as a city, and were probably responsible for many of Rome's earliest permanent structures. This situation would last until the local aristocracy, following a well-established pattern that had long ago played itself out in Greece and other parts of Italy, felt strong enough to seize power and found what came to be called the *Res Publica*.

## The Sixth Century and the Fall of the Monarchy

War-bands are also likely to have been responsible for the early Romans' reputation as raiders and cattle rustlers, reflected both in the legend of Romulus and Remus and in stories of how the former populated early Rome with

criminals and brigands. The raiding and pillaging of neighbors is ubiquitous in Livy's and Dionysius' accounts of early Roman warfare. The rape of the Sabine women fits this context: as in many Indo-European traditions cattle and women are both seen as movable property. Indeed, the oldest version, from Fabius Pictor (fr. 9 (Beck and Walter)) and repeated by Cicero (*Rep.* 2.12–14), sees the women as wholly passive; only Livy (1.9.6–10.1, 11.5–13.5), Ovid (*Fasti* 3.167–258), and Dionysius (2.30–47) later inject them with a personality. Dionysius, in fact, has the Romans carry off women from several different Italian peoples, as they had been doing for some time with neighbors' livestock. The incident may equally reflect early *conubium* between the Romans and the Sabines of the nearby Quirinal hill, which may have ushered in a period of Sabine dominance as our next three kings, Titus Tatius, Numa Pompilius, and Ancus Marcius, are all Sabine. This time also saw the Sabine god Quirinus amalgamated into a divine triad with the Roman Jupiter and Mars, and from pre-literate times all Roman citizens were equally referred to as *Romani* or *Quirites*. Therefore it would appear as though some form of synoecism did take place in the eighth century between the Romans and their Sabine neighbors, perhaps brought about via the conquest of Rome by a series of Sabine warlords and their *suodales*.

Although on the surface the early leaders of Rome might have been clan warriors, some of them nevertheless must have come to act as kings in some way, embodying military, civil, judiciary, and religious authority, for the city did move beyond its belligerent *gens*-based roots. The archaic Latin inscription found under the *Lapis Niger* in the Forum, and to a lesser extent the fourth-century Etruscan tomb at Vulci (often known as the François Tomb), illustrate that Rome was indeed ruled by individuals exercising some sort of legitimate authority. While the tomb features a painting of Mastarna and the brothers Vibenna, proving only that people in the early Republican period believed the kings to have existed, the *Lapis Niger* inscription is more conclusive as it is possibly as early as 600 and clearly mentions a *rexs*, archaic for *rex* (king). This is highly significant: the *Lapis Niger* is a small sacred area in the Forum that at one point served as a shrine for a king. It contained an altar and the columnar inscription — much of which is lost — and very likely a statue. Votive objects found in and around the site date from 575–550, confirming a slightly earlier construction date. This coincides with the building of the *Regia* as the king's residence just east of the Forum (a cup from 625–600, inscribed with the word *rex*, has been found nearby). In the Republican period, this building served as the home of the *pontifex maximus*.<sup>10</sup>

Rome by the sixth century had emerged as a state with some form of organized government that went far beyond a simple rule of the sword. What caused, and accompanied, this shift was the growing power of the upper class in Rome to influence, and eventually to oppose, the monarch. The Roman

people too reorganized in the same period. It is likely that these were simultaneous responses from both monarch and subjects to each other's growing power. What little organization the very early Roman state had was probably based on *pagi*, small districts or communities. As the villages gradually merged, political activity came to be based on the *curia* and the tribe, both of which, supposedly instituted by Romulus himself, served as the basis for the city's earliest military levies. There eventually came to be three tribes each subdivided into ten *curiae*. The latter, however, were heavily tied to the *gentes* — indeed, they almost certainly evolved out of the clan-based warrior bands described above — as membership was hereditary and each tended to be dominated by one particular family, whose head served as the leader of the *curia*. By the sixth century, just as the king was starting to operate out of the *Regia*, so too did the aristocracy begin to move away from the gentilician system and to reorder themselves.

In what clearly appears to be an early power-sharing agreement, the heads of the *curiae* organized themselves into a single body with the right to advise the reigning monarch. Membership was confined to men over 50; it was clearly envisioned as a council of elders, as is apparent from its name: *senatus* or senate, derived from *senex* (elderly man). That the *curiae* formed the basis of the earliest senate is plain from the fact that their chamber was called the *Curia*. Later Romans believed that it was built by the king Tullus Hostilius, and hence this building was often referred to as the *Curia Hostilia*, but his reign (672–641) is too early, as the foundations of the building go back only to around 600: a chronological symmetry exists between the new epicenter of aristocratic power, the *Curia*, and the seat of royal power in the *Regia*, constructed roughly at the same time.<sup>11</sup>

In between the *Regia* and the *Curia* stood the *Comitium* and within it the *Lapis Niger*. In this area the earliest voting assembly, the *comitia curiata* — with citizens divided, as the name suggests, by *curiae* — was by now meeting on a regular basis and had begun to vote upon issues that affected the entire community: war, peace, law, and, so we are told, the granting of formal power to a new king. The *curiae* probably evolved out of older clan-based war-bands, and this perhaps explains the Roman propensity for voting in blocks when in an organized assembly. That monarchs by the sixth century had to be formally confirmed in power by at least some citizens speaks volumes about the upper classes' new potency.

In fact the *Lapis Niger* itself may be the greatest symbol of this potency: it defined the *Comitium* as public as opposed to royal space. And the king in its inscription may well have been Servius Tullius, who reorganized Rome's political and military structures midway through the sixth century. By this time the city certainly had a large enough population to make reforms necessary. And while some later constitutional changes are falsely ascribed to him

(see below), it has been postulated that during his reign the *comitia curiata* was either created or reformed to introduce the hoplite phalanx. Other innovations involved new tribes still based on the *gentes* but tied increasingly to location rather than family.

The city was also now asserting its pre-eminence in Latium, and this necessitated using its army more frequently. Thus the new system should probably be seen as primarily military. This entire process, from institutionalizing the monarchy to strengthening aristocratic wealth and political power and organizing the citizenry for military levies, illustrates that Rome was now a fully-fledged state well beyond its roots as clan-based settlements ruled by warlords. These developments culminated with the fall of the monarchy sometime in the late sixth century. While this event was remembered by Romans through the mythological rape of Lucretia, in reality it repeated a phenomenon that had already played itself out around the Mediterranean. With the absence or death of a king around 509, the aristocracy at last felt powerful enough to take full control of the government. Although Lars Porsenna probably forced monarchy on the city one more time, until 504, the process had by then become unstoppable. Expelling Porsenna may have required military action, but really a revolution along the lines of the one led by Lucius Iunius Brutus is not necessary to understand the disappearance of the kingship. The sixth century thus marks a watershed in the history of early Rome.<sup>12</sup>

## **The Beginnings of the Republic and Rome's Early Wars**

Unquestionably, whether the Republic was founded in 509, 508, or 504, the period was accompanied by a degree of strife and chaos. Despite the advances towards organized government, *gens*-based bands of warriors were still common in central Italy and the Romans found themselves frequently at war. More than one warlord attempted to take the city and install himself as its leader (n. 8). This new warfare had several effects: firstly famine, forcing the senate to seek a treaty with Carthage in order to allow grain be imported. This treaty, which Polybius (3.22.3–13) claims to have seen himself and is certainly historical, also gave the Republic a degree of legitimacy in that its government had been recognized by Carthage, the leading power in the western Mediterranean at the time. The concordat itself, furthermore, illustrates that outsiders were not always on the defensive at the end of the sixth century, as it makes clear that Rome, as well as Carthage, had territorial ambitions in central Italy, making this our first concrete evidence for both Roman and Carthaginian imperialism.

The second effect of this period of endemic warfare was civil strife, as we are told that as early as the mid-490s the citizens of Rome clamored for more political representation in return for their increased military responsibilities. This was the beginning of the so-called Struggle of the Orders, a conflict that supposedly continued down to 287. While some have dismissed the earliest accounts of *stasis* as unhistorical, and while two centuries of unabated political turmoil are unlikely, it is nonetheless possible that the “Struggle” was actually a series of independent political standoffs that were conflated into one by later Roman historians. The episodes by and large center on relations between the plebeians and the patricians. The latter, the *patres* of the state, evolved out of those wealthy families who had the right to send one of their members to the earliest form of the senate during the monarchical period. By the late sixth century this had become a closed caste, and in the early Republic they exercised a lock on political and religious offices.

Plebeians, regardless of how much wealth they amassed, could never move up in status. Many theories have been postulated concerning the origins of the plebeians, but it seems that the simplest is also the most likely: they were Romans who were not patricians. Moreover, it is important to note that the Struggle of the Orders, whether one or a series of conflicts, was no democratic revolution; Roman society did emerge in the third century with a “mixed constitution” where the people had some power, but the political battles of the preceding two centuries were fought by and for well-off plebeians who believed that their wealth, which now often rivalled that of individual patricians, entitled them to a share of the opportunities and the prestige that accompanied political office at Rome.<sup>13</sup>

Warfare appears to have increased dramatically in scale and in ferocity after around 500, and our sources speak of conflicts happening on an almost annual basis. Famine in central Italy added to the chaos as via the *ver sacrum* various settlements evicted groups of young men, who often turned to a life of raiding and looting. Throughout the period the cities on Italy’s western coast came under frequent attack, and the Romans themselves fought many battles at their very walls and, at least once, within the city itself. Unsurprisingly, Rome experienced a decline in wealth and prosperity. Far fewer imported goods entered the city and there was a marked decrease in permanent architecture. Nevertheless, Rome remained the leading city in Latium, becoming its hegemon and leading a common defence.<sup>14</sup>

Rome now required greater amounts of men to serve in the army. Moreover, by this time the city had adopted the hoplite phalanx, and the larger this formation was, the better it functioned. There is no doubt of the military nature that was at the heart of these internal conflicts at Rome, and it has been argued that the early phase of the Struggle of the Orders in fact constituted an Italian hoplite revolution. As there is no reason for the *comitia centuriata* to have

been initiated by Servius Tullius, as several of our sources claim, it was probably created during the early part of this period, as one of the first concessions from the patricians in return for the plebeians' military service. The martial nature of this assembly is obvious from its organization as well as the fact that it had to meet outside of the *pomerium* on the *Campus Martius*, where the legions were chosen. Furthermore, in 357 the Romans banned political assemblies that took place far from the city, and thus we can infer that, from its inception until this point, the *comitia centuriata* was still viewed in some way as a type of warriors' assembly, and could be convened by a consul while on campaign. All the same, the creation of this political body in itself provides a clear example of how Rome was gradually leaving clan-based groups of warriors behind in favor of a military organized and commanded by the state.

The *comitia centuriata* took over the main functions of the *comitia curiata*, which gradually sank in importance. The centuriate assembly dealt with issues that affected the entire citizen body, in particular the election of magistrates, who would often serve as generals in the army, and it voted on declarations of war and on peace treaties. Thus its primary function was to ensure that the state only went to war with the approval of the people and that these had some say in whom they had as leaders. All of this strongly bolsters the argument that the *comitia centuriata* was an early-fifth-century creation, born out of military necessity brought on by a dramatic increase in the number of wars the Romans had to fight. All the same, it was dominated by the wealthy and thus it is not long before we hear of renewed strife at Rome. In 494 the patricians acceded to the creation of a new assembly, one just for plebeians, the *concilium plebis*. And to run this assembly, as well as to protect plebeians from increasing threats of debt-bondage from the patricians, a body of ten tribunes was created, each one armed with a new weapon, the veto, which gave these magistrates the ability to call a halt to political proceedings that they determined acted against plebeian interests. As a foil to this, around 471, when the *concilium plebis* began to organize itself by tribe, the patricians possibly created the final Roman assembly, the *comitia tributa*, which, as it was organized by tribe, was more efficient than the *comitia centuriata* and was able to pass laws much faster and with shorter notice.<sup>15</sup>

The Struggle appears to have cooled by the mid fifth century, but the military situation from which it was born remained. Thus, as the role of the people at Rome evolved, so too did the way in which the city was governed. Although the Romans believed that the dual consulship went as far back as the late sixth century, our sources indicate that the years down to 367 were characterized by experiments with various forms of government, no doubt brought on by the volatile nature of the times. In the very early fifth century the chief magistrate appears to have been the *praetor maximus*; the term *praetor*, "one who goes before", implies leadership, and the fact that the office always came with a

grant of *imperium* strongly presupposes that at some point it was the highest magistracy in Rome. From the mid fifth century onwards things fell deeper into flux. From 451 to 449 the state was ruled by a board of ten magistrates, the *decemviri*, then in 440–439 by three *praefecti*. Government even seems to have been suspended altogether in 444. Finally, from 426 to 367 Rome settled on a board of annually elected military tribunes with supreme authority. Thus by the late fifth century, as reflected in the purely martial nature of its leadership, Rome had emerged as a militarized state from the period of anarchy that engulfed much of Italy. While later Romans liked to believe that they always had militaristic tendencies and that they were somehow destined to conquer, in reality the Rome that conquered the Mediterranean only emerged in the early fourth Century, forged by decades of fighting for its very survival.<sup>16</sup>

## The Fourth Century and Roman Hegemony

There is no doubt that Rome was aggressive before the fourth century, and always harbored aspirations to be the power in central Italy. But the same can be said for any of the other states in the region, had they had the population and resources necessary for the establishment of a hegemony. However, Rome by 400 was markedly different from its neighbors: it was now a militarized state where every man, regardless of status, was expected to serve in the military. This service was indelibly linked both with manhood as well as citizenship.

The shifting attitude towards war in Rome can be viewed through religion. An obscure and largely amorphous goddess named Duellona (classical Bellona) represented war to the Romans of the fifth century. Likened to the Greek Ares, she symbolized the chaos of conflict; she personified disorder and was the antithesis of civic life. Temples to her were thus forbidden inside the *pomerium*. She appears to have gradually sunk in importance during the fourth century and the last known vow to her took place in 296. Mars, on the other hand, while always a deity associated with battle, was by the early fourth century the main Roman war god; he received his first major temple in 388 and by 350 this shrine was used as a muster point before an army set out on campaign. Dedications to him would increase significantly over the following 200 years. His other major attributes from earlier times, as a protector of fields, livestock, and borders, were now forgotten and he became associated only with warfare. Unlike Duellona, however, Mars not only represented strength and courage on the battlefield, but war as an ideal undertaking for male citizens. Thus war and, by extension, conquest were now seen as a normal state of being for the Romans, who by the fourth century were mobilizing their adult male population on a far greater scale than perhaps any other state in the Mediterranean.<sup>17</sup>

Roman warfare, however, was probably still confined to raiding and border disputes for much of the late fifth century. While the period of anarchy may have militarized the Romans, what turned Rome into an aggressive imperialist state was the introduction of profit into war. This turning point perhaps occurred with the conquest and destruction of Veii, just 24 km north of Rome, in 396. Our sources ascribe a great deal of relevance to the victory over Veii, and so it is clear that this was more than just a minor triumph over a local rival. The Romans had battled on and off with Veii for economic supremacy for over 80 years. But in 396, the Romans, after managing to tunnel under the walls, sacked and destroyed Veii rather than simply taking it, selling its inhabitants into slavery. The territory was then made *ager Romanus*, public land, and distributed in small plots to Roman citizens. The war brought in a great deal of plunder and represented a massive increase in the territory controlled by Rome. Moreover, it also exemplified a shift in both Roman tactics and Roman imperialism. For the first time large-scale profit had been taken from a war. This, combined with the increasing prestige attached to military victory, created a climate of competition among the aristocracy for field commands, and began the process by which the Romans went from unorganized raiders to systematic conquerors.

Rome was seriously shaken in 390 when Gallic warriors conquered and sacked the city. The Capitoline served as a citadel for the survivors and the invaders were expelled only with great difficulty and large bribes. This led to the construction of a new wall around the city (using stone taken from quarries that once belonged to Veii, it should be added), and it also derailed Roman expansion for a significant period. The debacle against the Gauls may, furthermore, have prompted the Romans to bring the military under the full command of the state. Such a move would fit well with the transitional nature of Roman warfare at this time, moving from small-scale local conflicts to increasingly larger wars. This would also be an ideal time to begin the abandonment of the hoplite phalanx and move gradually to the manipular formation for which the mid-Republican legions would become so famous.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, the intensity of warfare increased in the decades after 390, when wars of conquest, fueled by aristocratic competition, resumed. Such competition, however, came with a price as the upper economic stratum of the plebeians, who could now be counted as wealthier than some patricians, renewed the conflict between the orders and clamored for access to the offices with military commands attached to them. A small number of plebeians had managed to become military tribunes with supreme authority, but by and large generalships were confined to the patriciate. What also drove the issue forward was that from about 375 the plunder coming into Rome from warfare was regularly increasing. This freed the wealthy from the need to run their estates for profit and allowed them to concentrate more on public and political life.

The demand of the plebeians for access to the highest offices came to a head in the early 360s, as the senate and the *concilium plebis* frequently clashed, at times even violently. In 367 the plebeian tribunes threatened to lead their followers out of the city in a *secessio* or strike. At this point the patricians appear to have realized that yearly profit-driven warfare could not continue without the cooperation of the soldiery, and the affair produced the *lex Licinia Sextia*: from 366 military tribunes with supreme authority would cease to exist and military commands would henceforth be given annually to two consuls elected by the *comitia centuriata*, one of whom had to be a plebeian.

The establishment of military magistrates with equal rank had several consequences. In the immediate sense, to symbolize the peace that had been established between Rome's two orders, a temple to the goddess Concordia was erected in the Forum, and for the first time plebeians felt that this area was no longer the preserve of the patricians. We should furthermore see the popularization of the myth of the city's dual foundation by Romulus and Remus as coming from this time, with the two representing the patricians and the plebeians as well as the dual consulship. But, most importantly, the *lex Licinia Sextia* significantly increased the intensity of Roman warfare and imperialism as a series of plebeian generals attempted to establish themselves. Lacking the traditional legitimacy of the patricians, plebeian consuls sought to prove themselves worthy of their new-found equality by excelling on the battlefield and winning ever larger triumphs.<sup>19</sup>

This harmony, however, did not last long. The initial success of the plebeian consuls significantly increased competition for the office and within a decade a backlog of patrician candidates produced another clash; the traditional nobility withdrew their concessions of 367 and from 355 to 342 few plebeians held the consulship. The latter year turned out to be the breaking point for the plebeians, who used the ultimate weapon available to them. While the tribunes protested in the city, the army in the field mutinied, and took the unprecedented step of marching upon Rome. Armed rebellion against one's superiors tends to be anathema in military cultures. It is therefore a testament to how serious the situation was. Moreover, militaristic societies usually punish acts of insubordination with extreme severity, but on this occasion not even the leaders of the mutineers faced sanction when the dust settled. In the end, a dictator was appointed to restore order, and the patricians once again acquiesced without bloodshed. The upper-class plebeians reasserted their right to the consulship, and furthermore won for themselves the concession that in any given year both consuls could be plebeian. In order to ease the pressure coming from the backlog of those waiting to hold the consulship, a law was passed that forbade an individual from holding the office more than once in a ten-year period.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Struggle of the Orders had a few more rounds left — in 300 major priesthoods became open to the plebeians, while the *lex Hortensia* of

287 made *plebiscita* binding on the entire population — the dramatic and pivotal events of 342 appear to have at last made serious conflict between the patricians and plebeians a thing of the past. And from this point forward we can speak of a united Roman upper class. Several conclusions can be drawn from the events of 367–342. Firstly, the mid fourth century confirmed a clear link between warfare and social harmony at Rome. All classes within Roman society were willing to compromise and give up freedoms and monopolies rather than risk losing the benefits, material and honorific, that external conquest brought to them. While war in other cities might cause internal strife, it can be argued that the ubiquity of military action in Rome was responsible for the fact that the state would be almost completely free from *stasis* for the next two centuries. In addition, this harmony extended to the lower classes, as is witnessed by one of the principal demands of the mutineers in 342: that their names not be struck from the rolls of those eligible for military service. Campaigning allowed the common soldiery chances to rise socially, while plunder provided a significant source of additional income. Finally, competition amongst the new, united nobility for the consulship and for greater military victories, and subsequent memorializations, remained, and this too in part drove conquest forward. But this rivalry was tempered by a collective spirit, where the group indirectly worked together to prevent individual competition from becoming damaging to the whole.

The settlement reached with the Latins in 338 gave Rome the ability to win long wars. The second treaty with Carthage in 348, as recorded by Polybius (3.24), illustrates that the Romans did not have control over all of Latium, but nonetheless continued to harbor clear ambitions there. Thus the First Samnite War (343–341) was cut short when the Latins, together with the Campanians, began a struggle to break the Roman hegemony in central Italy. The conflict lasted three years and Rome emerged as the victor only with difficulty. As a result, in 338 the Romans dismantled the previous system that tied all Latin settlements, including Rome, to each other, and replaced it with a series of treaties binding these peoples individually to the Republic. Some Latins were even incorporated wholly into the Roman state. Even the few remaining Latin centers which stood outside this settlement were prevented from exercising any independent foreign policy. Most of all, Rome was now in full control of each state's military, and these were absorbed into the legions under the status of *socii* (allies; singular *socius*). The settlement would gradually be extended to all of Italy, and it, along with the colonies that had been set up over the last century, gave the Romans unmatched resources of human capital. This, in combination with Roman militarism, shaped the history of the Mediterranean for the next 200 years.<sup>21</sup>

Rome's first taste of large-scale warfare came once again against the Samnites (327–304). In the years before Rome had nearly hemmed in Samnite territory

via a series of colonies. A further colonial foundation at Fregellae and an internal dispute in Neapolis eventually led to war. The first five years saw a few Roman successes, but the Samnites forced a ceasefire when they trapped an entire consular army in 321 at the Caudine Forks. The peace, at least to the Romans, was only temporary, and fighting resumed in 316. Our sources, mostly Livy and Diodorus, record a seesaw struggle for the next several years as both sides scored victories and penetrated deeply into each other's territory. Finally, in 305 the Romans scored crushing victories in the Ager Falernus in Campania and at Bovianum in Samnium. The following year the legions marched into Samnite territory almost unopposed and, after causing much destruction, forced a peace. Both sides were exhausted; thus the treaty was not overly harsh and the Samnites retained some power. In the end the Samnites, although possibly as militaristic as the Romans, were wholly out-matched when it came to resources.

The years 298–290 would come to be known as the Third Samnite War, but this was by and large a rebellion of Rome's subjects in Etruria and Umbria, who were joined by the Gauls and Samnites. Rome used its manpower advantage to field several armies at once and eventually to defeat each power individually. Only the Samnites and the Gauls seemed to be able to coordinate, but these suffered a large defeat in 295 at Sentinum in Umbria. The conflict ended in a complete Roman victory five years later, with defeated states forced to become allies. Only a few peoples in Italy remained outside Roman dominance.

One of these was the Greek colony of Tarentum in the southeast, and this place would unknowingly provide the greatest example of just why Rome would emerge as a major power, if it had done so not already, in the coming century. A dispute between Rome and Tarentum led the latter to appeal to King Pyrrhus of Epirus (306–302, 297–272), cousin of Alexander the Great and leader of a large mercenary army which included 20 elephants. Since the third treaty between Carthage and Rome in 306, all of Italy had been defined as Rome's sphere of influence, and thus, although Pyrrhus was fighting on behalf of an independent city, the Romans were not about to let a foreign power establish itself on the peninsula. The legions for the first time faced a professional fighting force from the east, armed with the *sarissa* and organized in the Macedonian phalanx. The battle at Heraclea with Pyrrhus was a close affair, with the Romans acquitting themselves well, but in the end the Greeks emerged victorious. Despite the invaders being joined by the Samnites and several other Italian peoples, Rome steadfastly refused peace overtures. A second victory by Pyrrhus in 279 at Asculum cost him a good portion of his army, and he soon fled to Sicily. Returning in 275, he was fought to a standstill at Beneventum. This proved to be the last straw, and he was forced to quit the peninsula for good. Tarentum would fall in 272. Rome had managed to win a war without being victorious in a single battle. Militarism allowed the

Romans to see this difficult conflict through to its conclusion, while manpower resources, both Roman and allied, permitted victory, and within less than a decade the Roman army was taking on enemies outside Italy.

A multitude of factors are responsible for placing the Romans on the brink of a Mediterranean empire. Not the least of which is compromise. Despite strong authoritarian tendencies, compromise was ever-present in Rome. Only once, in 342 (above), do we ever hear of Romans turning against their own state and never in their early history did a dissatisfied group make common cause with an enemy. The ability and willingness to compromise meant that the Romans themselves did not have to face the same *stasis* as other peoples. Compromise can be seen as one of the central themes of early Roman history, and was furthermore a principal reason behind the Republic's military success.

There is nothing in the early history of Rome that shows the city to be predestined to become an imperial capital. Even so, by the fourth century Rome had emerged as a power that was markedly atypical: an aggressively imperialist state where an aristocracy consistently pushed for war and a huge percentage of the citizenry were under arms. The process by which Rome achieved this degree of bellicosity rests on four pillars. First, there was the endemic warfare and fights for survival of the fifth century that militarized society. Second, the introduction of serious plunder as a part of warfare in the early fourth century. This turned the Romans from raiders into conquerors. The major concessions won by the plebeians in the period 367–342 should be seen as the third pillar. As more people had access to generalships, this substantially multiplied aristocratic competition and created a culture of regular warmaking in which successive leaders tried to outdo their immediate predecessors. Finally, the Latin settlement of 338 permitted Rome to bring vast resources of manpower to the battlefield, allowing the Republic to recover from losses and to endure long wars of attrition. In the wars against Carthage that were to come, the militaristic nature of Roman society combined hyper-competitiveness on the part of its aristocracy and desire for plunder amongst its common soldiery to give Rome the desire and the drive to see through lengthy conflicts.

## NOTES

1. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.756–759, 781–783, 851–853; see Bettini 2006; Rehak 2006, 136–138. Cicero on empire: *Off.* 1.38; *Rep.* 3.35; see Richardson 2008, 63–79, 89–91. Roman imperialism not atypical: Eckstein 2006, *passim*; esp. 181–216; Eckstein 2008.
2. Hellanicus, *FGrH* 4 F84; Damastes, *FGrH* 241 F45; Alcimus *FGrH* 560 F4; Pearson 1987, 33; Vanotti 2006; Timaeus, *FGrH* 566 T 7, 9b-c; Brown 1958;

- Momigliano 1977, 37–66; Pearson 1987, 47, 85–86; Antigonus, *FGrH* 816 F1; Fabius Pictor, *Histories* F7a-c (Beck and Walter). For the foundation date of Varro see Plut. *Romulus* 12.3–6; Solinus 1.18.
3. Diocles: *FGrH* 820 F1; Ogulnii: Livy 10.23.11–2. The mysterious Promathion's version (*FGrH* 817 F1) is probably much older than the late fourth century; however, the fragment quoted by Plutarch (*Romulus* 2.3–6) is clearly corrupted as it starts out with Romulus alone being prophesied as Rome's founder and ends with the twins. The primacy of the hearth and of Hestia (Vesta) strongly suggests later Roman interpolation; cf. Wiseman 1995, 57–61.
  4. Romulus and Remus as the Etruscan *gentes* Rumlnas and Remne: Schulze 1904, 219, 368, 579–581; Wiseman 1995, 92–94, 197 nn. 19–22. As Romans and Sabines: Momigliano 1989, 58–59. As Rome and Capua: Carcopino 1925.
  5. The murder of Remus as a blood sacrifice: Ennius, *Ann.* 1.74 (with Skutsch 1985, 224); Flor. 1.1.8; Propertius 3.9.50. The greater role of Remus: Antigonus, *FGrH* 816 F1; Dionysius of Chalcis, *FGrH* 840 F12, 14, 21–22; Cassius Hemina, 2 F14 (Beck and Walter); D.H. 1.73.3; Egnatius *apud* *OGR* 23.6; Kallis, *FGrH* 564 F5. In general cf. Adam and Briquel 1982; Cornell 1995, 57–63; Wiseman 1995, 63–76, 117–128, 138–144.
  6. Oral history and memory: Raaflaub 2006, 126–30. Rome's earliest centuries: Cornell 1995, 48–57; Forsythe 2005, 82–4; Holloway 1994, 14–55.
  7. *Septimontium*: Antistius Labeo *apud* Festus 474–6L; Paulus Festus 458–9L; Plut. *Mor.* 4.20.69; cf. Pliny, *NH* 3.69; Carandini 1997, 267–285, 360–380; Cornell 1995, 74–75. Early Roman villages: Carandini 1997, 280–359; Cornell 1995, 53–57, 80, 92–94, 102–103.
  8. Note that for the calendar announcements the *comitia calata* at least sometimes met in the *Curia Calabra* chamber on the Capitoline (cf. Festus 49L; Macrobius 1.15.10, 19; Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.654; Varro, *LL* 6.27). That it also met in the *comitium* is suggested by the term “*kalator*” in the *Lapis Niger* inscription (below): Ammerman 1990; 1996; Carandini 1986; 1990; Forsythe 2005, 83–86 who, 84 n. 4, correctly points out that the construction of Rome's first wall does coincide with Cincius Alimentus' foundation date of 729 (fr. 6 (Beck and Walter); Rich 2007, 10–11; Torelli 1989, 36–38).
  9. Archaic *sodales/suodales*: Stibbe *et al.* (1980) on the *Lapis Satricanus* (*CIL* 1.2.2832a). Mastarna, the brothers Vibenna, and Servius Tullius: *CIL* 13.1668; D.H. 2.36.2; Festus 486.12–16L; Tac. *Ann.* 4.65.1–2; Varro *LL* 5.46; Alföldi 1965, 212–231; Buranelli 1987, 234–235. Fifth-Century *gens*-based war-bands: Diod. 11.53.6; D.H. 7.19.2–4, 21.3, 64.3–4, 9.15–22, 10.14–17.1; Livy 2.16.4–6, 48–50, 3.15.5–18.11; Ovid, *Fasti* 2.195–242; Plut. *Coriolanus* 13; Rawlings 1999. In general, see Cornell 1988; 1995, 84–85, 133–141, 143–146; Forsythe 2005, 102–105, 192–200, 205–206.
  10. Romulus recruiting criminals: Livy 1.8.5–7; early Romans as raiders and cattle rustlers: Livy 1.4.8–9, 5.3–4; rape of the Sabines: Cornell 1995, 75–80; Dumézil 1970, 67–73; *contra* Raaflaub 2006, 130, seeing the myth as reflective of Greek colonization. François Tomb: Alföldi 1963, 212–231; Buranelli 1987, 234–235; Momigliano 1989, 94–96; Raaflaub 2006, 131. *Lapis Niger*: *CIL* 1.2.1; Festus

- 184L; Coarelli 1983–5, 1.166–199; Forsythe 2005, 73–74, 87; Holloway 1994, 83–90; Smith 1996, 166–71. *Regia*: *LTUR s.v.* “*Regia*”; Carandini 1997, 512; Coarelli 1983–5, 1.56–78; Cornell 1995, 239–241; Forsythe 2005, 87–88; Smith 1996, 172–178.
11. *Curiae*: D.H. 2.7.3, 12.14, 21.3; Festus 180L; Laelius Felix *apud* Gell. 15.27; Livy 1.13.6; Plut. *Romulus* 14; Tac. *Ann.* 12.24; Cornell 1995, 114–117. Senate: *LTUR s.v.* “*Curia*”; Dio fr. 5.11; D.H. 2.12.1; Festus 288L, 290L; Livy 1.8.7, 17.9, 49.7; 2.23.1; 45.24.12; Ovid, *Fasti* 3.127; Varro, *LL* 5.155; Coarelli 1983–5, 1.122, 127–130; Cornell 1995, 116; Forsythe 2007, 25–26; Gjerstad 1953–73, 3.217–259.
  12. *Comitium*: D.H. 2.12.14; Festus 42L; Livy 1.17.7–11, 32.1, 49.7; Botsford 1909, 152–153, 168–173; Cornell 1995, 115–117; Forsythe 2005, 109–110; 2007, 25; Meyer 1983, 124–125; Raaflaub 2006, 136. Servian reforms: Cic. *Rep.* 2.22.39–40; D.H. 4.14–19.4; Livy 1.42.5–43.13; Ogilvie 1965, 166–176; Cornell 1995, 190–197; Forsythe 2005, 111–115; 2007, 26–28. Fall of the monarchy: D.H. 4.64.4–67.4; Livy 1.57–60; Ovid, *Fasti* 2.721–852; Val. Max. 6.1.1; Cornell 1989, 257–264; 1995, 215–226; Forsythe 2005, 147–149; Zevi 1995. Porsenna: D.H. 5.21–35.1; Pliny *NH* 34.39.139; Tacitus, *Histories* 3.72; Cornell 1995, 216–218; Momigliano 1989, 93–94; Raaflaub 2006, 130–131; Vliet 1990, 247.
  13. Famine: Livy 2.9.6, 34.2–5. Treaty: Serrati 2006, 114–118. Struggle of the Orders: in general, Cornell 1995, 242–271; Forsythe 2005, 157–177, 327–344; Raaflaub 2005; 2006, 138–141; Vliet 1990, 247–257.
  14. Ampolo 1990; Cornell 1989, 264–275, 281–308; Raaflaub 1993, 137–141; 2006, 138; Scott 2005. *Contra Rich* 2007, 11–13, who disputes the frequency and defensive nature of Rome’s wars in this period.
  15. *Comitia centuriata*: Cornell 1995, 195–197; Forsythe 2005, 109–115; 2007, 26–33; Momigliano 2005, 168–175. Ban of 357: Livy 7.16.7–8. *Concilium plebis* and plebeian tribunes: Diod. 12.25.2; D.H. 6.89–90.2, 10.30.6; Festus 422L; Livy 2.32.2–33.2, 58.1, 3.30.5; Eder 1993; Wittman 1995. *Comitia tributa*: Diod. 11.68.7; D.H. 9.43.4; Livy 2.56.2–3, 60.4–5. Forsythe 2005, 177–183, argues, correctly I believe, that the organization of the *concilium plebis* into tribes in 471 is actually a doublet of the creation of that assembly from 494. What was actually inaugurated in 471 was the *comitia tributa*. In general see Cornell 1995, 256–262; A. Drummond in *CAH<sup>2</sup>* 7.2, 212–225; Nicolet 1980, 224–226; Staveley 1972, 129–131; Taylor 1966, 59–64, 74–76.
  16. *Praetor maximus*: Twelve Tables *apud* Festus 518L; Cinc. fr. 9 (Beck and Walter), *apud* Festus 276L; Livy 3.55.12, 7.3.5–8; Brennan 2000, 20–23; Cornell 1995, 227–230. *Decemviri*: Cic. *Rep.* 2.61.3; Livy 3.33.1; Cornell 1995, 272–6. *Praefecti*: Livy 4.13.7, 20.8. Military tribunes with supreme authority: Diod. 12.32.1; D.H. 11.62.1; Livy 4.7.1; *MRR* 52–3, 66–114. In general see Stewart 1998, 52–111.
  17. Duellona: *CIL* 1.2.441; Livy 8.9.6, 10.19.17; Varro, *LL* 5.73. Mars: *CIL* 1.2.2832a; D.H. 2.70.2, 4.22.1, 6.13.4; Livy 6.5.8, 7.23.3; 10.28.1, 22.10.9; Plautus, *Miles* 11–12.

18. Victory over Veii: Diod. 14.93.2; D.H. 12.11.2–12.2, 15, 13.3; Flor. 1.6; Livy 5.19–22, 30.8; Plut. *Camillus* 5–6.1; Val. Max. 4.2. See Harris 1990. Gallic sack: D.H. 13.6–9; Livy 5.39.5–49; Plut. *Cam.* 22–30.1; Pol. 2.18.2–3, 22.4–5. Wall: Livy 6.32.1; Cornell 1995, 198–202; Holloway 1994, 91–101.
19. *Lex Licinia Sextia*: D.H. 14.12; Fabius Pictor, *Hist.* F23 (Beck and Walter); Livy 6.42.9–15, 7.18.5, 21.1; Plut. *Camillus* 42; Cornell 1995, 327–40; Develin 2005, 298–307; Forsythe 2005, 362–7; Stewart 1998, 95–136. Temple of Concordia: Ovid, *Fasti* 1.641–4; Plut. *Cam.* 42.4; Coarelli 1983–5, 2.67–74, 87–88. Romulus and Remus: above n. 4.
20. Livy 7.38.8–42.2; Develin 2005; Hölkeskamp 1993.
21. Livy 8.13.10–14; Cornell 1995, 347–352; Forsythe 2005, 289–292; Oakley 1997–8, 2.538–559; Salmon 1982, 40–56; Serrati 2007, 485–488.