

# 6

## Rome, Carthage and the West: 500-146 BC



31a. Alexander the Great, with ram's horn (alluding to Alexander's special relationship with Zeus Ammon), on a coin of Lysimachus, ruler of Thrace, 297/6-282/1 bc (p. 151).



31b. Flamininus, Roman conqueror of Macedonia, on a gold coin struck in Greece, 196 bc: a mixture of Hellenistic royal portraiture and Roman traits (p. 171).



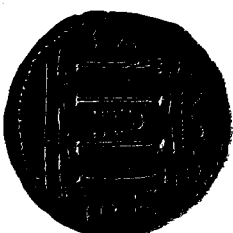
31c. The Italian bull goring the Roman wolf, on coinage of Italian rebels, c. 90 bc, with the legend (in Oscan) 'viteiui' and mint control letter 'A' at top (pp. 221-2).



31d. The portrait of Mithradates (89/8 bc; p. 232) echoes the image of Alexander (Plate 31a), part of his self-fashioning as a traditional Hellenistic monarch.



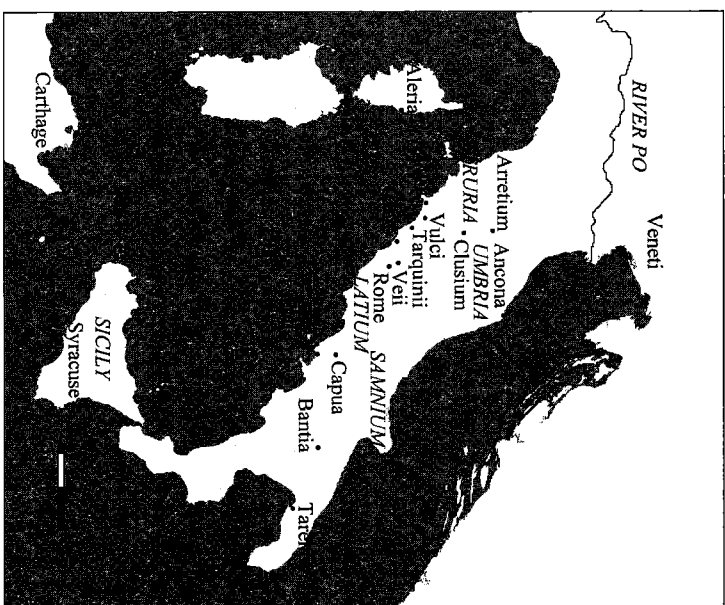
31e. Kneeling Parthian (in un-Roman trousers) returns the Roman standards captured at Carhae (p. 246). The legend reads: 'Caesar Augustus received the standards'.



31f. The Temple at Jerusalem, as imagined on coins of Jewish rebels, AD 134/5, with the legend in Hebrew 'Shimon' (p. 284).

'Where the strong current divides Europe and Libya.' This quotation from the Roman poet Ennius, writing his *Annals* in the 180s and 170s BC, encapsulates the theme of this chapter. The *Annals* described the conflict between the Romans and the Carthaginians in Spain, and in particular a sea battle in the straits of Gibraltar and the subsequent surrender of Gades to the Romans in 206 BC. We have already observed how the opposition between Asia and Europe was represented as the driving force of the eastern Mediterranean. Around 200 BC Philip V of Macedon had proclaimed himself 'master of Europe'. Shortly afterwards, Philip and Macedon were made subject to the Romans, and in this quotation Ennius might be implying a new take on the old dichotomy: the struggle now was between Europe and Libya (modern North Africa).

We have already seen the changes in the Greek world, following the Persian Wars of 480 BC: the emergence of the new power of Athens, its struggles with Sparta, the warring Greek states, the rise of Macedon, the conquests of Alexander the Great and his Successor kingdoms. Into that world, Rome entered from the end of the third century BC. Here we explore the Roman story, from its beginnings right through the period covered by the previous two chapters. The story begins with Aeneas' flight from the sack of Troy to Italy, and Romulus' founding of Rome (traditionally in 753, or 751 or 748 BC) and its line of kings. The last king was expelled and Rome became a Republic in 507 BC. Internally, power now rested with the two consuls, the Senate and the popular assemblies. There were struggles for power within Rome between two groups, known as patricians and plebeians, but externally Rome's power spread first over the Latin states in its immediate vicinity, and then over much of the rest of the Italian peninsula by the third century BC. The other major player in this region was Carthage, founded in the late ninth



Map 20. The Italian peninsula in the third and second centuries BC.

century by Phoenicians from Tyre. As it became by far the greatest Phoenician city, the Romans normally referred to its inhabitants as 'Poeni', the Latin for Phoenician; the related adjective 'Punicus' has been taken over into the English word 'Punic'. From the late sixth century BC Rome had diplomatic relations with Carthage, and this had peacefully defined their respective spheres of influence, but the growing power of both states brought them into conflict in the third century BC. The three Punic Wars (264–241 BC, 218–202 BC and 149–146 BC) left Rome victorious, with control over central North Africa and parts of Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal). In the meantime, Rome had also been drawn into the Greek world. The destruction in 146 BC of both Carthage and Corinth marks a turning point in the history of the Mediterranean.

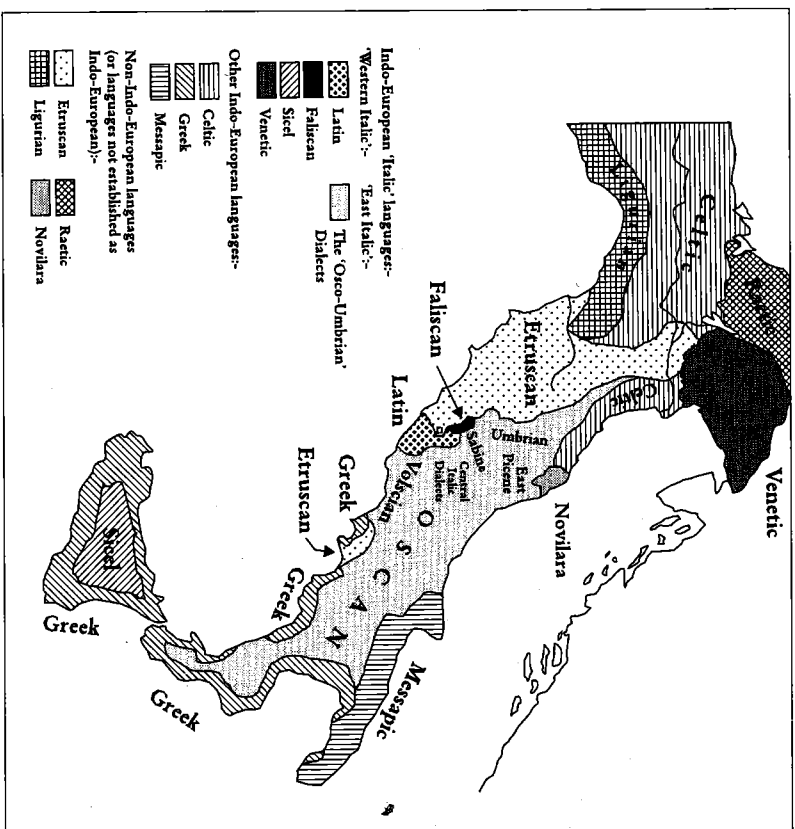
This outline of Roman history was what was normally accepted in Rome by the first century BC. Our problem is that we lack full contemporary sources for most of the period down to 146 BC, or even later. For

Roman expansion from 220 to 167 BC, we have the Greek historian Polybius, contemporary only with the end of his narrative, and his work too does not survive complete. Our principal narratives are those by Livy, writing at the end of the first century BC, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing shortly afterwards. One difficulty is that Livy's work, which covered events up to his own time, is complete only to 295 BC; Dionysius' history narrated events only to the outbreak of the First Punic War, but is fragmentary from 447 BC onwards. More seriously, as we shall see, much of the received outline of Roman history which they present is extremely problematic, as later generations made use of the past for their present political ends. But, put more positively, those uses of the past are what make Roman history interesting. Instead of dismissing stories of Aeneas and Romulus, on the grounds that they tell us little about very early Rome, this chapter explores the telling of such stories in the course of the Republic.

A key context within the Italian peninsula for the re-creations of the past was a great diversity of cultures and languages. Greeks had been in contact with the region in the Bronze Age, and had been trading with, and settling in, the Italian peninsula since the eighth century BC. In the fifth and fourth centuries BC there were twenty-three Greek *poleis* in the southern part of the peninsula. The most northerly of these *poleis* were Neapolis (modern Naples) and adjacent Kyme (Latin: Cumae); the rest were in the toe, instep and heel of Italy, with another forty-seven in Sicily. The settlers were mainly from the Greek mainland and Greek was the dominant language of the settlements, in the case of Neapolis as late as the Roman empire. The mainland Greeks had been trading with the Etruscans since the eighth century BC, and Etruria formed a special export market for Greek pottery and other goods. These imports were used by local elites for their own purposes, and played a major role in the transformation of Etruscan society in the sixth century BC. Rome, lying between the Greek communities of southern Italy and the Etruscans to the north, also had contacts with the Greek world from an early date. Rome and the settlements immediately around it did not import Greek goods on the scale that the Etruscan cities did, but some of the contacts were more than merely transient. In the sixth century BC an Athenian pot was deposited as an offering in the sanctuary of the god Vulcan in the area of the Roman Forum. The striking thing is that the pot was decorated with a scene

of the Greek god Hephaestus ascending to heaven on a donkey, a common Greek story. The association between Hephaestus and Vulcan, which was later absolutely standard, must have been in the mind of the dedicator of this pot at this early date. But the gods of Rome, though they may sometimes have been imagined on Greek lines, were thought of as Roman and not Greek.

The linguistic map of the Italian peninsula was very complex. In the eighth century the Etruscans had taken over from Greeks their alphabet, which they employed to write down their own language (above, p. 98). This was the first time that writing had been employed in the Italian peninsula. By the sixth century at the latest, nearly twenty languages, and associated dialects, of Italy also had alphabets, mostly derived from the Etruscan alphabet. Within the diversity of languages in the Italian peninsula, there were three major language groups: Greek in the southern



Map 21. Languages of the Italian peninsula, c. 400 BC.

coastal areas; Etruscan in the north-west; and Oscan-Umbrian (also known today as Sabellian) in the centre and south. Etruscan and three other minor languages were not Indo-European in origin; this is partly why Etruscan remains rather opaque to us today. Oscan-Umbrian was the most important member of a group of 'Italic' languages, as the linguists classify them. Other members are Venetic, in the region of modern Venice, if indeed it is correctly classified as an 'Italic' language, and Latin. Around 400 BC Latin was a minor member of this group. Even within Latium, Latin varied: around 200 BC Praeneste had a reputation in Rome for linguistic differences from Rome.

### Dante and the languages of Italy

The linguistic diversity of Republican Italy reminds us that we need to avoid talking of 'Italy' in this period, which is why we have used instead the geographic circumlocution 'Italian peninsula'. There was no natural unity to the peninsula. Its unification was something achieved by the Romans in the course of the centuries to come, with its culmination in the first century BC. The linguistic unification achieved by Rome in the same period did not last for ever. Around AD 1300, in a wide-ranging treatise *De vulgari eloquentia* ('On eloquence in the vernacular'), the poet Dante surveyed the fourteen or more Italian vernaculars of the peninsula in his own day, which were regional, but which also varied within each region. Modern scholars note that these vernaculars had developed in parallel out of spoken Latin, and that there were in addition small outposts of Greek and Albanian in the south. Dante was seeking justification for the use of an Italian vernacular in which he could write high literature, in opposition to what he saw as the artificial language of Latin, in which paradoxically he had written this treatise, and the contemporary vernaculars of Provençal and French. He argued in favour of a supra-regional illustrious vernacular, which already existed, he claimed, in poetry. This vernacular was in reality related to his own vernacular of Tuscan. Dante used a less elevated and more wide-ranging version of the supra-regional vernacular a few years later in *The Divine Comedy*, but it was the literary Tuscan used by the fourteenth-century authors Petrarch and Boccaccio, as canonized in the Renaissance, which eventually formed the basis of modern Italian.

Stories about the earliest years of Rome were in circulation by at least the middle years of the Roman Republic. They had points of reference in ancient monuments and rituals in and around the city, which reinforced their significance. Evander was an important early figure and would feature prominently in Virgil's *Aeneid* as Aeneas' guide round the site of the future Rome and as the father of Pallas. He was said to have come to the area from Arcadia in the Peloponnese sixty years before the Trojan War, and to have founded the first settlement in Rome on the Palatine hill, allegedly named after the town of Pallantion in Arcadia. He was held responsible for founding a major cult of Hercules. The story was that Hercules was passing through Italy on his way back to Greece, having captured the cattle of Geryon, one of the canonical twelve Labours of Hercules. The cattle were seized by a local monster, Cacus, but Hercules defeated him. In turn, Evander established a cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima ('Greatest Altar'). The altar itself, as rebuilt in the second century BC, was probably on a monumental base, covering  $22 \times 32$  metres and 4 metres high; the rites were celebrated through the Republican and imperial periods; the 'steps of Cacus' were displayed on the slopes of the Palatine Hill.

The story of Hercules and the cattle of Geryon seems to have been widespread by a very early date. In the fifth century BC the Greek historian Hellanicus of Lesbos tells how a calf which had escaped from the herd wandered all down the peninsula and swam the straits to Sicily. Hercules, pursuing the calf, asked all the inhabitants if they had seen the calf (*damalis* in Greek). They replied in their own tongue, referring to the *vitulus*, the Italic word for calf, and so Hercules named the whole land Vitulia, after the calf. This nice 'Just So' story, which implies that Hellanicus knew a little Italic, is perhaps the best early evidence for a widespread local sense of Italy as an entity. The calf, or bull, as the symbol of Italy will recur in the political and military struggles of the first century BC.

Aeneas, in his flight from the sack of Troy, eventually arrived in Italy, where he met the elderly Evander. The king of the neighbouring peoples, Latinus, initially fought Aeneas, but then made peace with him, a peace which was cemented by marriage between Aeneas and his daughter Lavinia. In her honour, Aeneas named his first settlement in Italy Lavinium. Aeneas' son Ascanius (also known as Iulus) founded another settlement nearby, at Alba Longa, which his descendants ruled for many generations. As we

shall see, the local association of Aeneas and his family with Lavinium and Alba Longa was firmly established by the fourth century BC.

When was Rome itself founded? The oldest versions, told by Greek authors, placed the foundation in the immediate aftermath of the Trojan War. Hellanicus of Lesbos, for example, in a meticulous work of chronological scholarship, had Aeneas coming to Italy, with Odysseus, and founding the city, which he named after Romē, a Trojan woman. We do not know whether these Greek authors picked up and developed stories circulating in Italy already at this date, but this early chronology, associating the foundation of Rome with the fall of Troy, was normal until the end of the third century BC. An alternative chronology placed the founding of Rome much later than the Trojan War. Given Eratosthenes' dating for the sack of Troy, 1184 BC, some writers by the end of the third century BC were placing the foundation of Rome around the middle of the eighth century BC. This sort of date eventually became canonical: everyone in British schools used to be taught that Rome was founded in 753 BC. The gap between the sack of Troy and the eighth century BC was filled by a sequence of rather anonymous kings of Alba Longa.

The last king of Alba Longa, a usurper who had killed his elder brother, had a daughter, Rhea Silvia. She became a Vestal Virgin, and was thus sworn to chastity, but was seduced by the god Mars. She was imprisoned, and her twin boys were exposed in a basket. The basket was carried away by the river, ending up caught by a fig tree. A she-wolf suckled them in a nearby cave, a shepherd and his wife reared them, and the boys, Romulus and Remus, grew up to depose their usurping father and to found a new settlement where they had been reared. This story of the foundation of Rome has early roots. On the Palatine hill, the she-wolf's cave, the Lupercal, was the focus of an ancient annual ritual; and an ancient reed hut, said to be the shepherd's hut, was dutifully preserved and restored as necessary, probably until as late as the fourth century AD. Other monuments accrued: in 296 BC a statue of the she-wolf suckling the boys was erected at the site of the famous fig tree, and was then featured on the first silver coins to be minted at Rome, in the 260s BC. This statue, which does not survive, is different from the famous Capitoline Wolf, as featured in the imagery for the 1960 Rome Olympics and the AS Roma football club: that statue might be even older (sixth century BC), though scientific tests have suggested that it is a product of the

thirteenth century AD; this huge difference in date is due to the lack of good comparanda for the statue. Imagery of the she-wolf and twins was used by the Greek city of Chios in the early second century BC (above, p. 172).

One story about Romulus was that he established an asylum in his new city, and that the mixture of those who sought refuge here, political refugees and slaves, was a significant feature of Rome. The presence of slaves among the refugees corresponded to an important aspect of later Roman practice: slaves who were formally freed by their masters received Roman citizenship. According to Philip V of Macedon in 214 BC, instituting a city in Thessaly (northern Greece) to admit resident Thessalians and other Greeks to its citizenship, grants of citizenship to ex-slaves were responsible for the expansion of Rome and the creation of its numerous colonies. No Greek city-state regularly treated its ex-slaves in this way. The Roman practice was underpinned by a story that Servius Tullius, the sixth king, was himself the son of a slave, and that he founded a cult of Fortune, whose mutability made the cult popular with slaves. Rome saw itself as growing from very mixed origins, in contrast to the Athenians, who prided themselves as being indigenous to Attica. But two very different lines were taken as to the nature, and desirability, of the mixture, depending on the political circumstances. Opponents of political populism in the first century BC talked of the Roman populace as the 'dregs of Romulus', the scrapings of the barrel that made up Rome. On the other hand, for those in the first century AD in favour of welcoming non-Italians into the Senate Romulus' asylum was an important precedent (see below, p. 257).

Rome has what might seem an excessive number of founding figures, in comparison with the one founder that most states claimed. So one might think that originally Rome had only one founder (Romulus), and that associations with Aeneas are quite late. But Aeneas, Latinus and Romulus have in common that they were worshipped after their deaths (unique at Rome in the Republican period), but under another name: Aeneas as Pater Indiges, Latinus as Jupiter Latiaris and Romulus as Quirinus. These cults are ancient, and their associations with the three founding figures go back well into the Republican period. It might also seem odd to associate Rome, even indirectly, with Aeneas, a Trojan and therefore enemy to the Greeks. Was this a story developed at a time when the Romans saw themselves as anti-Greek? In fact, the Trojans were

almost never seen as anti-Greek, let alone as 'barbarians'. The war between the mainland Greeks and the Trojans was the first major war of Greek history, and many communities sought to link themselves to the Greek world by claiming descent from Trojan refugees. The final example of this strategy is the story told by the twelfth-century historian Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *History of the Kings of Britain*, following one of the traditions reported in a ninth-century historical compilation. This claimed that Brutus, grandson of Aeneas, was exiled for killing his parents, and after many wanderings reached an island, now named Britain after him, where he defeated and killed the giant descendants of Albion, and founded the British monarchy. Though some people at the time were very critical of Geoffrey's work, his attempt to create a framework for early British history, and to relate a remote island to the springs of civilization, was still accepted by some British antiquarians as late as the eighteenth century.

Rome was ruled by seven kings, from Romulus to Tarquinius Superbus. Later tradition was clear about the sequence of kings, and about their varied contributions to the development of Rome: Romulus created the Roman Senate, and the organization of Roman tribes; Tarquinius Priscus, the fifth king, expanded Rome's power to the north and celebrated the first triumph; Servius Tullius, the sixth king, reformed the Roman army and the structures of the city of Rome. In fact, this narrative breaks down at the first hurdle: it is impossible to imagine only seven kings ruling Rome over a period of 250 years, with average reigns of about forty years.

Modern archaeologists have tried to outline the growth of the city in this period. Some have been seduced by the desire to find archaeological confirmation of the canonical stories, hailing an eighth-century BC wall on the Palatine as the work of Romulus. Others, rightly, have argued that it is wrong to use the historical tradition to suggest that the institutions of the later Roman state predate the physical growth of the city; instead, they argue that inferences should be drawn directly from the archaeological data, without contamination from the later historical tradition. It is clear that in the eighth and seventh centuries BC there was increased activity in the area of Rome. By the end of the seventh century Rome had become quite urbanized: the Forum area had been reorganized; cult sites had developed in several places, including the Capitol; stone houses had replaced huts on the Palatine. Rome was moving in the same

directions as contemporary settlements in Etruria, like Veii, which we examined in Chapter 2, and indeed in Greece. In the sixth century BC a massive wall was built round the city, securely dated at nearly two dozen spots. Eleven kilometres long, and running round all seven hills of Rome, the wall enclosed an area of about 425 hectares. It made Rome more than twice the size of any Etruscan city, and put it on a par with the major states in southern Italy and Sicily. The construction of the wall implies a unified state by this time, with its own army. In later tradition, the wall was ascribed to Servius Tullius, but it is a mistake to use the archaeological evidence to support details of the historical tradition about the kings.

Tidy Roman historical traditions about the seven kings also run foul of Etruscan traditions. An intriguing piece of evidence about Servius Tullius is a tomb painting from Vulci in Etruria, dating to the second half of the fourth century BC, which is much earlier than any surviving Roman source. With the people all carefully labelled, the painting depicts on opposite walls a scene from the *Iliad* of the sacrifice of Trojan prisoners at the funeral of Patroclus, and a scene from the history of Vulci also involving an attack on defenceless opponents. The *Iliad* scene, which also includes elements of Etruscan imagery, is a good example of how the Etruscans borrowed and adapted from Greek culture, and must be intended to be parallel in some way to the scene of local history. The local scene depicts events of the sixth century BC, 200 years previously (see Figure 2.1). The brothers Avle and Caile Vipinas (Aulus and Caelus Vibenna in Latin) and others from Vulci were fighting a grouping of men from Volturni, Sovana and Rome. Among the Vulcians was one Mastarna, who freed Caile Vipinas from his bonds; another man is shown killing Cneve Tarchunies Rumach, that is, Gnaeus Tarquinius of Rome. The Vibenna brothers of Vulci were important historical figures of the sixth century. The Gnaeus Tarquinius may be related to the Tarquinius known as kings, who both seem to be called Lucius. The episode preserved at Vulci is therefore of fighting between aristocratic warrior bands. The episode also hints at a future event featuring Mastarna, the loyal supporter of the Vibenna brothers, who is shown freeing one of them. Etruscan written traditions survived into at least the first century AD, when they were studied by the future emperor Claudius, a real scholar. Claudius reported that Etruscan sources claimed that Servius Tullius

was once the most faithful companion of Caelius Vivenna and took part in all his adventures. Subsequently, driven out by a change of fortune, he left Etruria with all the remnants of Caelius' army and occupied the Caelian Hill, naming it thus after his former leader. Servius changed his name (for in Etruscan his name was Mastarna), and was called by the name I have used, and he obtained the throne to the greatest advantage of the state.

This story conflicts, as Claudius notes, with the Roman tradition that Servius was 'the son of Ocresia, a prisoner of war'. It conflicts even more with another Roman tradition, which we have already met, that Servius was the son of a slave impregnated by a divine phallus. This complex set of stories illustrates the richness of local traditions in Etruria, depicted in the Vulci tomb at a time when the area was coming under severe pressure from Rome, and preserved long after Roman conquest. It also shows the fragility of Roman traditions about their kings, who may have been more like leaders of the aristocratic warrior bands seen in the Vulci tomb than formal kings, and emphasizes the extent to which the Romans came to write the Etruscans out of their own history. This Roman perspective in its turn has until recently led modern scholars too to separate Roman and Etruscan developments in this early period.

Stories about Numa, Rome's second king, reveal further complexities within Roman traditions about the regal period. According to Ennius, Numa founded the basic religious institutions of Rome, and ordered the perpetuation of what he had established after his death. This is an admirable and straightforward story, if perhaps slightly dull. But, also according to Ennius, Numa had consorted with the water nymph Egéria,



Figure 2.1. Painting from tomb at Vulci (known as the François Tomb, after its discoverer). From left: Caele Vipinas is freed by Mastarna; Larth Ulthes stabs Laris Papathnas Velznach (= of Volturni); Pena Arcmsnas Sveamach (= of Sovana) is killed by Rusece; Ventrichal... Ipsachs (of somewhere not now identifiable) is killed by Avle Vipinas; Marce Camitlinas is about to kill Cneve Tarchunies Rumach.



and it was from her that his religious inspiration came. Later Roman sources were embarrassed by the Egeria story, and sought to rationalize it away, but it is a genuinely early tradition about Numa. Some even thought that Numa could coerce Jupiter to come down to earth, and make him provide information by trickery. Numa's successor, Tullus Hostilius, found his instructions about how to coerce Jupiter, and tried them out at a time of crisis, but he and his sons were killed by a thunderbolt. These stories show that relations with the gods were in origin not simply a matter of rational human ordinance, but that the founding king had power that had not been passed on to his successors. Religion was not an attempt to seek out divine truths, let alone to coerce divine powers, but a more limited system of relating to the gods in a manner appropriate for mortals. This conception of religion seems to have been prevalent in 181 BC, when Numa's coffin was discovered by chance. The coffin contained a number of papyrus rolls, perfectly preserved. Some claimed that these rolls contained philosophy inspired by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras. This claim cannot be literally true, as Numa predated Pythagoras by 150 years, but it may be that the 'discovery' of the books was part of an attempt by members of the elite to impose new religious practices on Rome in the guise of tradition. Whatever the truth of this idea, the Roman authorities decided to destroy the books. They were too dangerous, and there could be no going back to the days of Numa himself.

### The Roman calendar

The fundamentals of the Roman calendar went back to the regal period. The Romans believed that originally, under Romulus, the year had ten months, beginning in March. The first four months, March to June, were named after gods (for example, Mars or Juno), or so it was often claimed. But the fifth to tenth months, July to December, were originally named after the numbers five to ten; months five and six, Quintilis and Sextilis, were subsequently renamed after *Julius* Caesar and *Augustus*. But as Romulus' calendar was poorly devised, Numa, it was believed, undertook major reforms: he created two additional months (January and February), he regularized the length of months, and he made 1 January the start of the year. Making any calendar fit the annual period of the earth's rotation

around the sun (365 days, 5 hours and about 49 minutes) is difficult, and during the Republic ad hoc adjustments to Numa's calendar were ineffective, so that by the mid-first century BC the calendar was 67 days ahead. The reform by Julius Caesar in 46 BC added two temporary months to deal with the 67 days, and decreed a regular extra day every fourth year. This Julian calendar remained in force in the west for the next millennium and a half, but its relation to the solar year was inexact, so that by AD 1582 the calendar was ahead by ten days. In that year Pope Gregory XIII decreed the omission of the extra ten days, and slightly modified the system of leap years, which were suspended in years ending in 00, unless they were exactly divisible by 400. Because the reform was decreed by the Pope, it was much resisted, even in Catholic countries, with riots in Augsburg. In Protestant Britain the Gregorian calendar came into effect only in 1752. The Orthodox Church in Russia and some other countries still uses the Julian calendar for fixed religious festivals, so that their Christmas falls on 7 January. The modern western calendar, whether Julian or Gregorian, is thus a direct continuation of the Roman calendar.

Stories about the early and middle Republic were, like those about the regal period, much affected by later events. Individual families had much to gain from enhancing the roles of their ancestors. A tomb perhaps of the Fabii, one of the major families of Rome, includes a third-century BC fresco with military scenes. They depict otherwise unknown occurrences in Rome's wars with the Samnites of central Italy, perhaps those carried out by a Fabius who was consul five times between 322 and 295 BC. It was clearly in the interests of the family to preserve, or enlarge, the deeds of its members.

Another tomb in Rome, of the Scipios, a key family in the third and second centuries BC, is especially important. Started in the third century BC, the tomb was modelled on earlier Etruscan family tombs: though cremation was the norm by this time, family members were inhumed in sarcophagi, which were arranged in order of importance round the tomb of the founder Barbatus (consul 298 BC) and labelled with elaborate verse inscriptions. The tomb was extensively modernized in the middle of the second century BC, as part of a move to give it more public prominence (see Figure 2.2). It was given a grand frontage in the latest style, in which were prominently displayed portrait statues of members of the family,

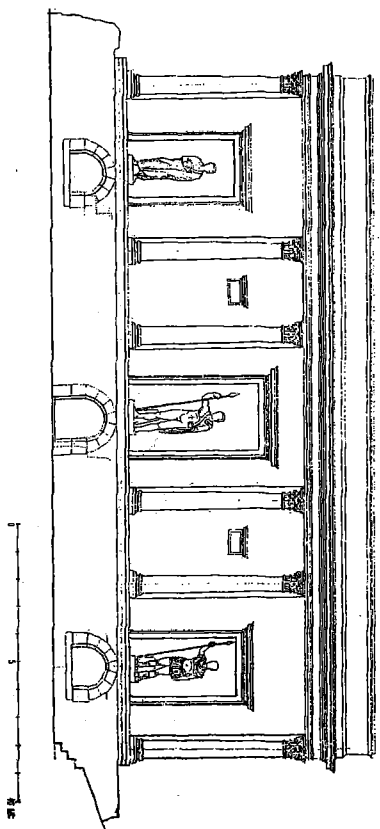


Figure 22. Tomb of the Scipios, reconstruction of frontage.

and of the poet Ennius. The inscription on the sarcophagus of Barbatus merits quotation: 'Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus, born with Gaius as his father, a brave and wise man whose appearance was equal to his virtue, who was your consul, *censor* and aedile, captured Taurasia and Cisauna from Samnium (?), subdued all Lucania and took away hostages from it.' Two lines which precede this text were subsequently erased, perhaps because they included a claim that Barbatus was the founder of the family, a claim best suppressed when later generations came to claim even earlier founders. What was left is a vivid statement by a leading family of Rome of the importance of the male line in a family, physical appearance, holding of public office and achievements in warfare. It also presupposes the importance of the people of Rome: the reference to Barbatus as 'your consul' presumably echoes what had been said in the formal public speech at the grand funeral that was typical for members of the Roman elite. The pressure of competition between members of the elite for success no doubt had consequences for the stories that were told. What is said in the inscription about Barbatus' campaigns is incompatible with the narrative that Livy gave of the same years.

For aristocratic families like the Scipios women had considerable importance. In religion, elite women at Rome had fewer roles than in the Greek world, in that (male) senators held the main priesthoods of Rome, but the wives of senators acted as a body at special moments to supplicate the gods, and were prominent at particular religious festivals; the daughters of senators, too, might be selected to be Vestal Virgins, a prestigious office modelled on that once held by the daughters of the

kingdoms of Rome. In death, to judge from the one surviving Scipionic example, women were buried in the family tomb in their own sarcophagi, duly labelled with their names, but with no eulogy of their achievements.

Achievements of male ancestors were of key importance to the next generations. This is very clear in the inscription on the sarcophagus of Barbatus' son (consul 259 BC): 'Almost all agree that this man, Lucius Scipio, was the best of the good men at Rome. He was Barbatus' son, your consul, *censor* and aedile. He took Corsica and the city of Alertia, and gave a temple to the storm-gods in recompense for their help.' Lucius' stress on his ancestry is striking ('He was Barbatus' son'), especially following the implicit recognition that Lucius' claim to be 'the best of the good men at Rome' was contentious. Appeal to the achievements of Barbatus was key to the success of Lucius, which illustrates an important point about Roman political life. Well over half of all men who were consuls between 179 and 49 BC had fathers or grandfathers who had been consuls, and this figure rises to about 80 per cent if more remote ancestors are included. These figures are not evidence of predestination at birth; rather, they show the success of candidates in appealing to their family's past when they stood for election to public office. This type of appeal was entirely typical of the way that the Roman elite operated, but was alien to the contemporary Greek world, whose political values were much more meritocratic.

The political structures of the Roman Republic familiar in the world of Cicero in the first century BC consisted of the Senate, the people and the magistrates. This tripartite structure was perhaps first articulated by Greek observers of Rome, long used to the system of council, assembly and magistrates in Greek city-states. Polybius, writing in the later second century BC, offered a classic statement of the case, arguing that Rome's phenomenal strength in his day was derived from the balance between the three elements. Such views, flattering as they were to Rome, were internalized by the Romans, and came to form part of the ways that they thought about their own state. But it would be a mistake to project, as the Romans did, a tripartite analysis of Rome back into the early Republic, let alone the regal period. There are good grounds for thinking that earlier structures were very different.

An early form of tension was not the balance of power between Senate, people and magistrates, but the polarity between priest and king or



magistrate. A story, recounted by Livy and other writers of the late Republic, told of a conflict between the king Tarquinius Priscus, who wanted to make institutional changes without consulting the will of the gods by taking auguries, and the leading contemporary *augur*, or official diviner, Attus Navius. Tarquinius, seeking to belittle the art of augury, asked Navius to divine whether he could do what the king was currently thinking of. Navius took the auguries and said that he could. Tarquinius replied, as he thought triumphantly, that he had been thinking of Navius cutting a whetstone in half. But Navius promptly, and miraculously, did cut the whetstone with a razor. The deed was commemorated at the actual spot, in the Forum, with a bronze statue of Navius, beside which rested the evidence of the whetstone itself. The moral drawn from this tale was that from then on no political or military decision could be taken in Rome without first consulting the will of the gods through augury. In the Republican period we rarely hear of such prominent individual Roman priests as Navius. Conflict between priests acting collectively and the magistrates did still occur, but the conflict involved no miraculous elements. Priestly office at Rome became a monopoly of senators (and in the case of the Vestal Virgins, their daughters), unlike in Greece, where priests were not drawn only from the political elite, and where women commonly held priestly office. By contrast, Navius came from a poor family, and was not a member of the senatorial group of *augures* established by Romulus, but he was also the archetypal *augur* in the Republican period. He even managed miraculously to move the fig tree which had rescued Romulus and Remus, from the banks of the Tiber to the Roman Forum. Stories about the early tension between priest and political authority had continued resonance during the Republic, when priests had supreme authority on matters of religious law, but could act only when called upon to do so by the Senate.

A second possible difference from the later tripartition between Senate, people and magistrates concerns the Senate itself. Later tradition is clear that the Senate was founded by Romulus, and Livy's narrative ascribes a major role to the Senate in the early Republic. It is possible that Livy is guilty of anachronism, in relation not only to the time of Romulus but also to the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Originally, the Senate was probably only an advisory body for the kings and then the two consuls, who took over the king's political powers. The new consuls each year would select such men as they chose to serve on their advisory council.

No doubt some men served repeatedly, but there was no presupposition of continuity in membership. Only with the passing of the Ovinian Law in the 330s BC did failure to be selected for membership of the Senate mean disgrace, and only gradually did the Senate become what it was in the late Republic: a body consisting of all who had held specific magistracies, with lifelong membership, unless the *censor*, a senior magistrate, struck them off for disgraceful behaviour; and hence a body with major political power.

By the second century BC an ambitious Roman man might hope to proceed through a sequence of magistracies, from quaestor up to consul. Each post had specific duties, whether civil or military, and defined powers. The magistrates, numbering thirty-two in the second century BC, were in the position to take initiatives, and so might seem to constitute a sort of government. In fact, they were merely a collection of competitive individuals, each holding office for only one year. Their powers were defined in two ways: the possession of *auspicium*, the power to consult the gods on behalf of the state, and of *imperium*, the power to command men at Rome or in the field. Both *auspicium* and *imperium* were seen as being continuations of the powers held by the kings of Rome. Romulus, in seeking to found the city, sought, and received, favourable signs from heaven. If both consuls died in office, the *auspicia* reverted to the Senate, which appointed as a temporary measure an *interrex*, who would hold elections for new consuls, and ensure the continuity of the *auspicia*. The name of the official, *interrex* ('interim king'), enshrined a belief that the office went back to the regal period. *Imperium*, so the Romans believed, was the power by which the kings had ruled at Rome, and had led their armies out to war. The two consuls inherited this power. Their collegiality acted as a brake on excessive influence in the hands of one man, and they took it in turns to possess the symbols of *imperium*. By the second century BC lower magistrates also possessed *imperium*, lesser than that of the consuls, and carefully defined as appropriate for each post.

The people of Rome had important political roles. When summoned by a magistrate with *imperium*, the people could make informal responses to speeches. When meeting in primary assemblies (*comitia*), the people were responsible for electing the magistrates, for passing legislation and for approving some decisions for action. The *comitia* involved no discussion or debate, just decisions taken by formal vote. Two types of *comitia* were believed to go back to the regal period. Important though

the *comitia* were, the Roman elite of the second century BC was clear that Rome was not a democracy in the sense that Athens had been in the fifth and fourth centuries BC; the votes of one type of *comitia* were explicitly weighed in favour of the wealthy classes. The good running of the state depended on a proper balance between the Senate, the people and the magistrates. This balance was possible in part because Rome's 'Republican' institutions were rooted in the period of the kings.

### The revolutionary United States and Rome

James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, authors of the *Federalist Papers*, advocating ratification of the new US Constitution, signed themselves jointly as 'Publius', recalling Publius Valerius Poplicola, first consul of the Roman Republic. Despite this type of rhetoric, some modern scholars argue that Rome played a merely decorative role for the Founding Fathers, and that the decisive arguments were those of Italian and English republicans of the previous two centuries. In fact, engagement with the Roman past helped to shape the arguments of the American revolutionaries. Colleges for men placed enormous emphasis on reading Latin and Greek authors, and at least some of the pupils were inspired by what they read. Thomas Jefferson recorded many classical authors in his commonplace book for 1758-73, some 40 per cent of the total, and his later huge library included many Latin texts in which he loved to lose himself. Women read classical books at home, in translation, drawing from them inspiration for their roles in life. Abigail Adams wrote regular letters to her husband, John Adams (Jefferson's great rival), signing herself as Portia, wife of Brutus, even wondering about what rights and duties women should have in the new state.

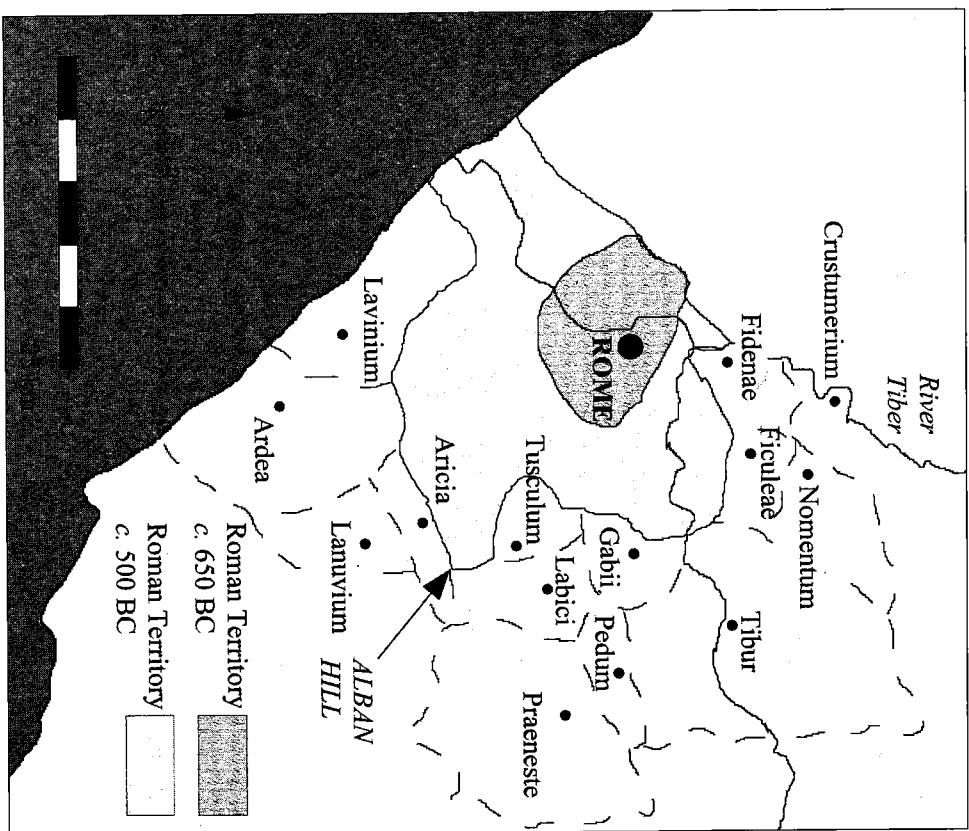
The Declaration of Independence in 1776, drafted by Jefferson, meant that the former British colonies were now republics, and dialogue with the history of antiquity helped to separate the new republics, the bastions of liberty, from the old feudal and monarchic regimes of Europe. The dangers of tyranny were exemplified in Alexander of Macedon, Julius Caesar and the subsequent emperors; Jefferson considered Tacitus, the great critic of the imperial system, 'the first writer in the world without a single exception'. Positive inspiration was drawn from other ancient examples. The Lycian League, which brought together twenty-three Greek city-states, was held

up as a model of an excellent confederate republic. For John Adams, in his *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States of America* (1787), the Roman constitution, as presented by Cicero, was exemplary in showing how to protect freedom and justice through a system of checks and balances. Adams was also impressed by Polybius' analysis of Rome; he included a translation and summary of it in his collection of republican sources, published for use by the delegates at the United States Constitutional Convention. As Jefferson said in 1795, in reference to America's 'experiment' of being governed 'on principals of honesty, not mere force', 'we have seen no instance of this since the days of the Roman republic'.

\*

The expansion of Rome's power within the Italian peninsula under the Republic began the process of the transformation of Rome from a state on the fringes of the major players, Greeks, Phoenicians and Etruscans, to a state with the largest ever European empire. Growth within Italy laid the foundations for Rome's expansion overseas, and its conflicts with the Carthaginians, to which we shall return. The initial phase, in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, was the consolidation of power in Latium, the immediate hinterland of Rome. In 507 BC, when Rome made a treaty with Carthage, the state behaved as the principal player in Latium, but shortly afterwards Rome was forced to create a more formalized relationship with the other towns in Latium, in what is known as the Latin League.

This League was held together not only by military force and self-interest, but also by a common sense of the past. Lavinium, 30 kilometres south of Rome, was noted as Aeneas' first settlement in Italy. To the south of the actual settlement were two important sanctuaries. A seventh-century BC burial mound, unusual in this region, received offerings from the sixth century, and in the fourth century BC was rebuilt as a shrine. It may be the monument identified later as the tomb of Aeneas himself. Not far away is a sanctuary with a line of substantial altars, increasing in number from three to twelve between the sixth and fourth centuries BC. They may commemorate the Penates, the powers which Aeneas had rescued from Troy, and to which he sacrificed on landing here. This important cult centre may have been used for sacrifices by the members of the Latin League. The second major location for the Latin League was the Alban Hill, a prominent hill 2.5 kilometres south-east of Rome. By



Map 22. Rome and Latium c. 500 BC.

tradition, Aeneas' son Ascanius founded Alba Longa. The settlement disappeared, allegedly sacked by Tullus Hostilius, but the nearby sanctuary on the Alban Hill was the location for the major annual festival of the Latin League in honour of Jupiter Latiaris, the deified version of Latinus.

In the course of the fifth century Rome's local power came under pressure, and in the fourth century the Latin allies of Rome revolted. After a series of wars, in 338 BC the old Latin League lost its military and political functions, though its festivals survived. From now on, the

male inhabitants of Italy under Roman control fell into four categories: full Roman citizens, Roman citizens without the right to vote, Latins and allies. All communities had two things in common: first, they had relations with Rome, not with one another; secondly, their obligations to Rome were defined in terms of military contributions, not taxes or tribute. As a result, Rome was dominant as far south as the bay of Naples, at the head of a vast army.

The size of Rome's territory in the early fifth century BC was about 900 square kilometres, dwarfing the other individual city-states in Latium. The overall extent of the territory of the Latin city-states at the same period was about 2,350 square kilometres. By comparison, at the same period the territory of Corinth was also 900 square kilometres, the same as Rome, and Athens about 2,400 square kilometres, the equivalent of the territory of all the Latin city-states. But by 338 BC the territory belonging to the Romans (*ager Romanus*) had jumped to about 5,500 square kilometres, and the territory of the new Roman alliances as a whole about 8,500 square kilometres. As a result, Rome could now draw on a huge territory, with vast resources of manpower for its army. The territory was larger than that of any contemporary city-state in mainland Greece, but about half the size of the area of the alliance headed by contemporary Syracuse.

Roman expansion outside Latium started in the fourth century, first to the north into Etruria, and then to the south. The emblematic event in the conquest of Etruria was the attack on Veii, Rome's nearest neighbour to the north, just 17 kilometres away. Veii by the fifth century BC had large fortification walls surrounding a substantial settlement. There had been two major wars over the previous century. The story of the final conflict, as told by Livy, is full and very detailed: a ten-year siege, ending in 396 BC thanks to the Roman response to a prophecy; a Roman stratagem, namely, a tunnel dug to emerge inside the Veian citadel; the sack of the city by Camillus; and the removal of the statue of Juno, the city's principal deity, to Rome. Livy was right that Veii was captured by Rome, probably in 396, but no details in his description can be relied on. The whole story is an epic elaboration of what happened, with deliberate parallels to the story of the sack of Troy: the ten-year siege, intervention by the gods, the stratagem, and the removal of Juno, which recalls Aeneas' removal of the Penates.

*Lays of Ancient Rome*

Modern scepticism about the details of the story of the capture of Veii goes back to the founder of modern critical scholarship on Roman history, B. G. Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, first published in German in 1811-12, became an instant success, being translated into English in 1828, and often reissued. Niebuhr has the distinction of being the first modern scholar to try and remove the legendary aspects from Livy's story, in favour of an account derived from the annals written in the Republic. As he says, the annals' 'account of the capture of the city has been entirely supplanted by a poetical story, belonging to the lay or legend, whichever one may choose to call it, of Camillus; an epic narrative, the features of which are irreconcilable with history ...'

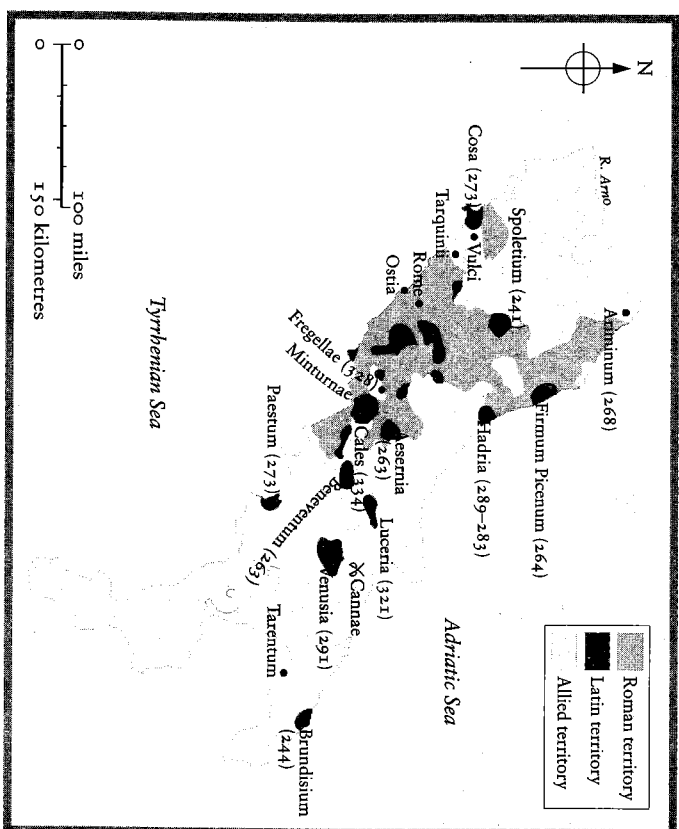
Niebuhr's reference to a 'lay' alludes to an important element in his theory of the transmission of stories outside the annalistic tradition. Following some earlier scholars, he suggested that lays or ballads, performed at banquets, elaborated stories about early Rome. This idea had a long life in the nineteenth century, and beyond. The most famous exponent of it was Thomas Babington Macaulay. While serving the Raj in India, he composed a set of four *Lays of Ancient Rome*, as examples of Niebuhr's lost lays. First published in 1842, the *Lays* had immense popularity, being required reading in British schools for about a hundred years. Even now many people can recite at least the opening of the first lay, about Horatius at the bridge: 'Lars Porsena of Clusium / By the Nine Gods he swore / That the great house of Tarquin / Should suffer wrong no more.' The irony of the popularity of Macaulay's *Lays* is that their Romantic emphasis on the legendary completely cast into the shadows Niebuhr's critical rejection of the truth of such stories.

In 386 BC Camillus, the conqueror of Veii, was also central to Rome's response to an attack by the Gauls. In middle Europe around 450 BC there emerged what we know as the La Tène culture, based on a strong warrior ideology. Pushed on by population pressure in their homelands, members of three of the newly established tribes crossed the Alps in search of new territory and riches in the Italian peninsula, following routes long known to them through earlier contacts via traders and mercenaries. They took over former Etruscan settlements in the fertile

Po valley, and pressed on down the east coast of Italy as far as Ancona. Some continued south, defeated the Romans and sacked Rome itself. This event left the Romans with an enduring fear of the Gauls, but, as with the capture of Veii, almost nothing that Livy tells us about the 'sack' of Rome is believable. Camillus, the hero of the hour, is compared to Romulus, as second founder of Rome, but the comparison is probably an invention of the first century BC, when, as we shall see in Chapter 7, comparisons with Romulus were topical. Shortly after the sack, using stone from quarries near the recently conquered Veii, the ancient wall round the city was rebuilt, so great was the dread of a repetition of the attack.

After Rome had recovered from the Gallic attack, Roman expansion north continued, and by the early third century BC Rome was clearly dominant in Etruria. By the middle of the third century, its conquests had also extended east and south, across much of central Italy. Roman territory again increased dramatically in scale, a fivefold increase from the 5,500 square kilometres in 338 BC to 26,000 square kilometres in 264 BC (Map 23). This territory extended south as far as the bay of Naples and east all the way across the peninsula. It was a vast area, some 20 per cent of the area of the Italian peninsula, easily outstripping the territory of any Greek city-state and now rivalling the size of the Greek kingdoms to the east. In addition to land owned by the Roman state, Rome had founded 29 Latin colonies (*coloniae*), whose rights were modelled on those formalized in 338 BC for the old members of the Latin League, and which had territories totalling 11,000 square kilometres. Rome also had another 125 or more allies, with territories totalling another 72,000 square kilometres. The whole area controlled by Rome and its allies was thus a massive 108,000 square kilometres. Rome had created alliances, not necessarily formalized in treaties, with its allies, relationships that entailed the supply of military aid to Rome and so enshrined Rome's supremacy. For the next 160 years, with the exception of the Second Punic War, Rome faced almost no challenges to its rule in Italy.

In the following century, between 264 and 146 BC, Rome continued to expand in Italy, both south and north. After the Second Punic War it took severe measures against major communities that had fought on the wrong side. Capua lost its ruling class, all its autonomy including citizenship, and its entire territory. Tarentum was sacked and lost some of its territory. Stiffening of existing treaties and confiscation of parts of



Map 23. Roman domination of Italy in 241 BC. Roman territory stretched south into Campania and across the peninsula to the Adriatic. A network of Latin colonies and Roman allies controlled the rest of Italy south of the river Arno.

civic territory were the main penalties imposed on those who had aided the Carthaginians. As a result, the amount of Roman territory grew, especially in the south of the peninsula. Another twelve Latin colonies were founded between 268 and 181 BC, but the next wave of colonies founded, from 184 BC onwards, were all Roman colonies, where all the citizens had full rights of Roman citizenship. By means of these colonies, Rome began to make its mark on the region between the Apennines and the Po valley, which Rome conquered from the Celts first in 218 BC and again during relentless fighting in the 190s and 180s BC.

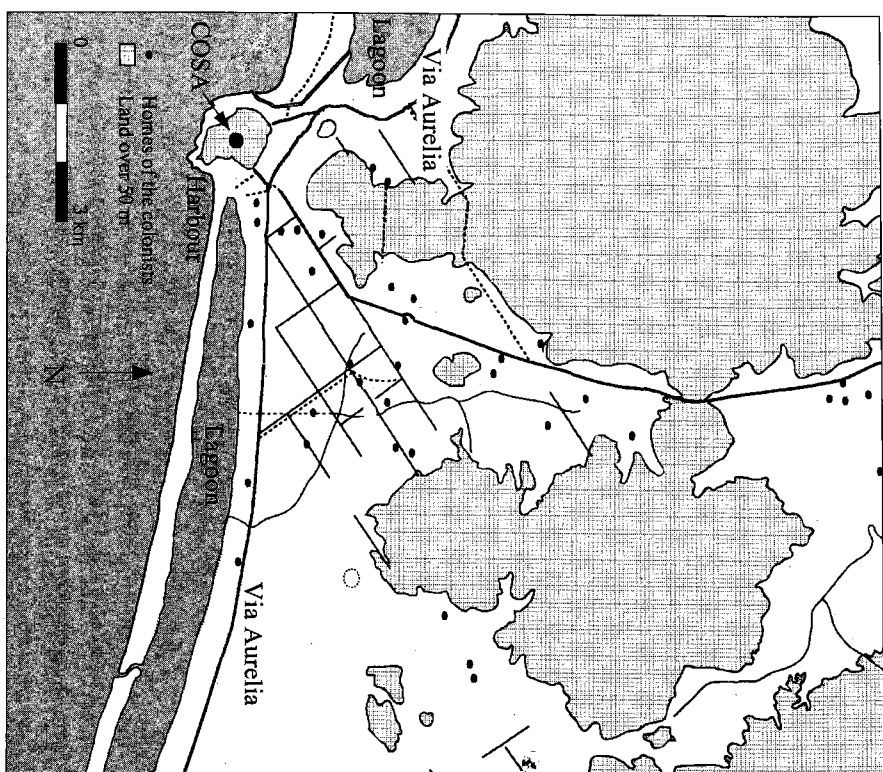
Italy as a whole featured in the Roman imagination by the middle of the third century BC. In 268 BC a Roman triumph was celebrated to mark a further increase in territory, on the north-east coast of Italy. As this region marked the completion of the conquest of Italy south of the river Arno, the triumphant general dedicated a temple to Tellus (significantly, 'Earth'), and there set up a map or representation of *Italia*, the whole of

the Italian peninsula. The scale of the implied political expectations for Rome was huge. A hundred years later the Elder Cato, a major politician, wrote a work, *Origins*, which placed the origins of Rome in the context of all the major Italian communities, from the deep south of the peninsula to the recently conquered area north of the Apennines. The Veneti in the north-east were of Trojan descent, being founded by the Trojan hero Antenor, and Ameria in Umbria, 70 kilometres north of Rome, was founded 963 years before the outbreak of the recent war with Persus (171 BC), which comes out as 1134 BC in our calendar. Italy in the middle of the second century was a mosaic of communities, proud of their own past, but also content to follow the leadership of Rome.

Rome in the second century also had the means to control Italy. In 186 BC a major religious scandal involving the cult of Bacchus erupted in Rome. The Roman Senate became extremely alarmed that the sexual improprieties alleged in the cult of Bacchus, the Greek Dionysus, also had wider ramifications. It feared that groups of those initiated into the cult existed throughout Italy, and that they formed an underground network which was politically subversive. Such fears were probably unfounded, though interesting as an insight into the nature of Roman paranoia; Italy did not seem as safe to them as it does to us in retrospect. But the state took decisive action: all Roman colonies and towns in Italy were obliged to follow the Roman decisions, and communities of lesser status were subjected to direct jurisdiction by the Roman consuls. In general, crimes committed in Italy affecting the security of the Roman state – treason, conspiracy and the like – fell under the direct jurisdiction of the Roman Senate. In addition, private individuals and communities in Italy seeking arbitration, damages or protection could, and did, appeal to the Senate.

Latin and Roman colonies, founded throughout the Italian peninsula, also played an important part in the extension of Roman control and Roman values. The traditional view saw these colonies as very uniform, and argued that Cosa, a Latin colony founded on the coast of Etruria in 273 BC, was the exemplary site, but in fact there was no single blueprint for these colonies. It is important not to project back to this period practices of a later epoch, and equally important not to impose an allegedly uniform model onto the archaeological evidence from Cosa. Nonetheless, Cosa does illustrate what an evolving Latin colony could be like. After the defeat in 280 BC of Vulci, one of the major Etruscan towns, a third of its territory, 550 square kilometres, was confiscated,

and allocated to the new town of Cosa. The territory was centuriated, that is, divided up into rectilinear plots of farmland for the new colonists, some 2,500 men (see also Plate 20); in 197 BC a thousand more colonists were assigned to Cosa, and it was perhaps only then that some of the more distant plots of land were settled by colonists. The town, covering 13 hectares, was laid out on a coastal hilltop, previously uninhabited; the nearby Etruscan settlement was completely sidelined. The settlement of Cosa was protected by magnificent walls and towers – a reminder that the new dispensation had been achieved by force of arms. Within the town, the plan was also laid out in rectilinear style, and the public buildings were perhaps modelled on those of Rome: the buildings for



Map 24. Cosa and its territory. The centuriation is shown by the rectilinear grid north-east of the town.

the local senate and assembly may have evoked the design of those in the Roman Forum. The town had an important harbour, and was also connected by land: the Aurelian Road, probably built in 241 BC, ran from Rome up the west coast of Italy past Cosa as far as Pisa, the next major port up the coast. The road, bypassing Vulci and other old Etruscan towns, enabled Roman troops rapidly to reach northern Italy, but also had long-term civilian consequences. The new road network for Italy created the basis for a new human geography of the peninsula.

An important linguistic consequence of the creation of colonies was the spread of Latin. For Cosa, Latin was the native language of the colonists drawn from Rome and Latium, but, equally important, Latin was the official language of all colonies, just as institutions were modelled on those of Rome. Latin was therefore exported to regions of Italy that had previously spoken other Italic dialects, or other languages (Etruscan, Greek, Celtic). In turn, Latin acquired some regional variations as a result of language-learning by people brought up in other dialects or languages, but at Rome there was considerable snobbery about use of rustic Latin and words in Latin borrowed from other Italic dialects or from Etruscan. By the second century BC Latin was the prestige language of the peninsula, and the pressures to adopt it quite widely were considerable. In 180 BC the Greek town of Kymē, which had fallen to Oscan speakers in the fifth century BC, but had received Roman citizenship in 338 BC, asked the Senate for permission to conduct some forms of public business in Latin; the request was granted, but the town could in fact have made the switch without asking the Senate. The local elite must already have been familiar with Latin, but Kymē also remained proud of its Greek past: the prophetic Sibyl was responsible for the oracle of Apollo here, and had been the source for Rome's Sibylline Books in the regal period.

Some local languages died out, or at least were no longer written down, in the third century BC, but others remained important throughout the second century, disappearing in written form only at the end of the first century BC. In the late second or early first century BC, the town of Bantia (just above the instep of Italy) inscribed its own constitution in Oscan. The type of Oscan employed and some of the civic institutions described were heavily influenced by Latin and by Rome, but the use of Oscan at all in this public context shows a desire to make a statement about Bantian distinctiveness in the face of Roman dominance.



Other expressions of local identities remained important after the Roman conquest. Etruscans continued to maintain their own sense of the past until at least the first century AD. Following defeat in a civil war in 80 BC, some losing Etruscans fled to North Africa, to a remote spot some 50 kilometres south-west of Carthage. The leader of the group, who probably came from Clusium (modern Chiusi), founded a new settlement there, which had boundary stones inscribed in a late north Etruscan script. The startling fact is that the inhabitants were called Dardanii, after Dardanus, the founder of Troy. The settlement was intended to be another Troy; sadly, it vanished almost completely. Some Etruscans, like the Veneti and of course the Romans, were proud of their Trojan origins. In Etruria itself, historical memories were also preserved, despite the dying out of most of the leading families in the first century BC. At Tarquinii, in the first century AD an extensive record was inscribed of the role of Tarquinii in the fifth and perhaps fourth centuries BC. Details of the military interventions of leaders of Tarquinii in Sicily, and in other Etruscan states (Caere and Arretium), as well as in a war against the Latins. This inscription was in Latin, but must have been derived from local records, in Etruscan. Displayed near the grand old temple in the centre of Tarquinii, the text illustrates the continuing local pride in the prowess of Tarquinii before the coming of the Romans.

In Roman eyes, the Etruscans were the masters of the art of divining the significance of prodigies, the birth of two-headed calves, lightning strikes and the like. Etruscan *haruspices* were regularly consulted by the Senate, which then had to decide what action should be taken as a result of the prodigy. The hereditary skills of the *haruspices* were highly valued by the Roman state, uniquely so for priests who were not Roman. And so highly were these Etruscan skills valued that the Senate passed decrees in the middle of the second century BC and again in the first century AD to encourage the maintenance of the art of the *haruspices* in the leading Etruscan families; the second time was on the proposal of the emperor Claudius. Rome's proper relations with the gods depended in part on the skills of a people whose foreignness was constantly emphasized.

The Roman conquest of the Italian peninsula and then of lands overseas also had consequences for the city of Rome. A victorious general who celebrated a triumph was entitled to build a monument in Rome. The most common type of victory monument was a temple, like that to Tellus. Indeed, most Republican temples were founded by triumphant

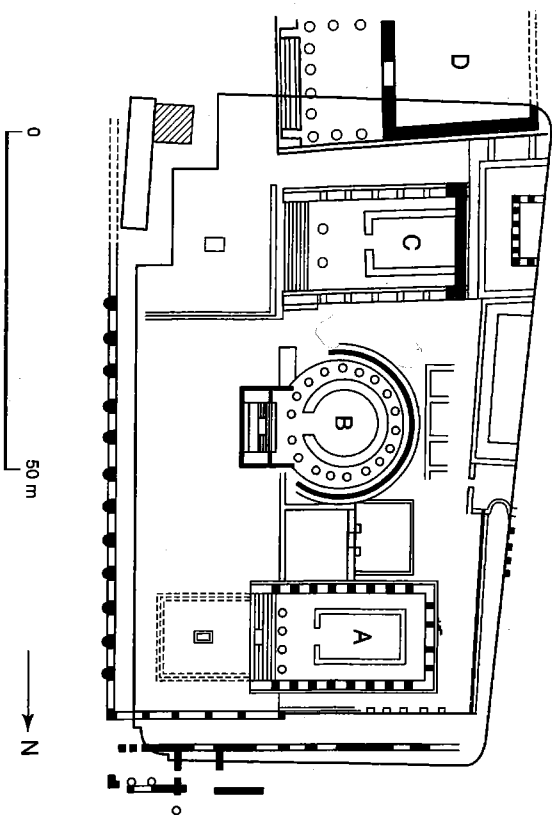


Figure 23. The four temples of the Area Sacra di Largo Argentina. Temple A, perhaps dedicated 241 BC; Temple B, to 'Fortune of this Day', in 101 BC; Temple C, built early third century BC; Temple D, built second century BC.

generals. They were probably built along the route taken by the triumphal procession, and the periods in which they were built (especially 300–250 and 200–160 BC) coincided exactly with the periods of greatest Roman military expansion. A neat example of the density of this temple building is given by the four temples built in the southern part of the Campus Martius, the Field of Mars (the so-called Area Sacra di Largo Argentina; see Figure 23). The four temples, built side by side, overlooked the route of the triumphal processions. They were built between the early third and late second centuries BC. Their dedications are uncertain, but Temple A was perhaps vowed by one Lutatius Catulus, in 241 BC, and Temple B beside it to 'Fortune of This Day' by his descendant, another Lutatius Catulus, in 101 BC. This is a nice example of a senator making the most of the achievements of a distant ancestor.

Rome remained rather undeveloped as a city in the early second century BC, but this was to change in the course of this century. According to a story in Livy, in 182 BC the Macedonian prince Demetrius, who was

pro-Roman, was taunted by his anti-Roman enemies at court; among other things, they mocked the appearance of Rome, which had not yet been beautified in either its public or its private spaces. At this point Rome was a backwater in comparison with contemporary Greek cities, with little sign of rational planning and with its new victory temples isolated in the urban landscape. Even in comparison with the Latin towns round Rome, Rome scored badly. In the later second century BC, at Praeneste (modern Palestrina), 40 kilometres east of Rome, a vast new sanctuary was built, making maximum use of a dramatic hill-site. The sanctuary, financed by the profits of the local elite from Rome's eastern conquests, rivalled the largest sanctuaries in the Aegean. Rome could boast no sanctuary like this until the middle of the first century BC. But in the course of the second century BC Rome did become more monumentalized. Aristocratic tombs became more prominent; for example, the tomb of the Scipios, probably located near the temple of storm-gods built by a member of the family, was enhanced with a new façade in the mid-second century BC. The civic centre of Rome also became grander in this period, but not as a result of actions by triumphant generals. Splendid basilicas replaced private houses on the north and south sides of the Roman Forum in 179 and 169 BC; they were paid for by public funds, but still bore the family names of the civil magistrates, the *censores*, responsible for commissioning the buildings. Thus by the 160s BC the Forum looked more like a contemporary Greek *agora*, with a central public space set off by colonnaded public buildings. However, the senatorial elite was suspicious of buildings which might give too much of an opportunity to the people of Rome. The people watched plays and spectacles in temporary wooden theatres. One or perhaps two stone theatres were started in the second century BC, but were pulled down, and only in 61 BC was the first permanent stone theatre started in Rome, a century after stone theatres were built elsewhere in Italy and three or four centuries after they were built in Sicily and other parts of the Greek world.

By the middle of the third century BC, Rome had become one of the major states in the Mediterranean world. Domestic conflicts within Rome had been resolved. The Roman elite provided strong leadership, and Rome's political institutions functioned in a stable fashion. Rome had come to dominate the Italian peninsula south of the Arno, and could draw on its manpower for its armies. This expansion came to draw it into conflict with the adjacent power to the south.

\*

Carthage has so far made only cameo appearances in the story. It is time to redress the balance, and to start analysis of the relations between Carthage and Rome with some consideration of how Carthaginians saw themselves. We need to try to escape from the viewpoint of the Roman victors, which inevitably depicted the Carthaginians negatively. Carthage, founded from Tyre in Phoenicia probably in the late ninth century BC, was situated on a spit of land jutting out into the sea. Like other Phoenician colonies of the period, it was well positioned to make the most of trade routes. The archaic settlement covered 25 hectares, or even 45–60 hectares on some estimates, which would place Carthage among the larger Mediterranean towns of the sixth century BC. Its walls are said to have been 37 kilometres long, more than three times the length of Rome's walls at this time. Its harbour was important from the outset, and Carthage had important trading interests in the central and western Mediterranean. From the fifth century BC onwards Carthage made military interventions in Sicily, and from the fourth century BC controlled the coast of North Africa from Cyrene in the east to the Atlantic in the west. The settlements along the coast were probably tied to Carthage by individual alliances, somewhat like relations between the Latins and Rome.

Carthage saw itself as a city with a Phoenician past and a Phoenician present. According to stories recounted by Greek and Roman writers, but possibly based on Phoenician sources, as a result of struggles for power within Tyre a losing faction fled first to Cyprus and then to the site of Carthage. Here their leader, the princess Elissa, was allowed by the king of the local Libyans to found a new settlement (Carthage, *Qart hadash*, means 'New City' in Phoenician). As the widow of Acherbas, priest of Melgart in Tyre, Elissa had brought with her objects sacred to Melgart, and founded a cult of Melgart at Carthage (Melgart, *milk gart*, means 'King of the City'). Because the Libyan king demanded that she marry him, Elissa, faithful to her late husband, killed herself by throwing herself on a pyre. The story of a foundation from Tyre was mirrored in ritual. Each year the Carthaginians sent tribute to the temple of Melgart at Tyre. In 332 BC, when Alexander the Great was besieging Tyre, he happened to capture the Carthaginian envoys who had brought the annual tribute to Melgart, and he dedicated their sacred ship to the deity whom he called Heracles. Tyre's subsequent loss of political freedom did not break the ties with Carthage, and the annual tribute continued until the destruction of Carthage in the second century BC.

In addition, rituals of Phoenician origin were performed at Carthage. Overlooking one of the city's harbours, Carthage had an open-air sanctuary, in which were buried vessels with the cremated remains of newborn babies and young children, or sometimes animals. The sanctuary is called a 'tophet' today, but this term, borrowed from the Hebrew Bible, was probably not that used by the Carthaginians. Another confusion is that the site is called today 'Salammbô', but this is simply the romantic name given to it by the French excavators of 1922, after the heroine of Flaubert's novel (see below). The sanctuary goes back to the earliest days of the settlement, and continued until the Roman conquest. In an area covering 6,000 square metres, more than 20,000 cremation urns and 10,000 dedicatory stones have been discovered. The latter have imagery alluding to Phoenicia, especially at times of conflict with Rome, and many have texts in Phoenician that refer to two Phoenician deities Ba'al Hammon and Tinnit 'face of Ba'al'. At least a dozen other Phoenician settlements in the west have similar but not identical sanctuaries. Ennius, as part of his general account of Carthaginian customs, mentioned that 'the Carthaginians are accustomed to sacrifice their little boys'. The pathetic reference to little boys can hardly be a neutral ethnographic observation. One might try to rescue the Carthaginians from the negative perspective of the Romans and deny that the cremated remains of children represent child sacrifice, but the ritual was as odd, and to our eyes as repugnant, as it seems: in other cemeteries children were inhumed, not cremated; and inscriptions in the 'Salammbô' sanctuary state that the ashes of the children or animals were an offering vowed to the god. Somehow, this major civic sanctuary was bound up with the self-identity of Carthage, in relation both to its Tyrian past and to the growing threat of Rome.

While maintaining and enhancing their Phoenician identity, the Carthaginians also borrowed from the Greek world. Between the fifth and second centuries BC the religious buildings of Carthage employed Greek styles of decoration, and the private houses are luxurious forms of houses known elsewhere in the Greek world. In 396 BC, as a result of their impiety during military action at Syracuse, the Carthaginians suffered military setbacks and a severe outbreak of plague; they therefore began to worship Demeter and Persephone in Carthage, according to the Greek rites, even involving prominent Greeks resident in the city. This level of Carthaginian interest in the Greek world helps to explain why

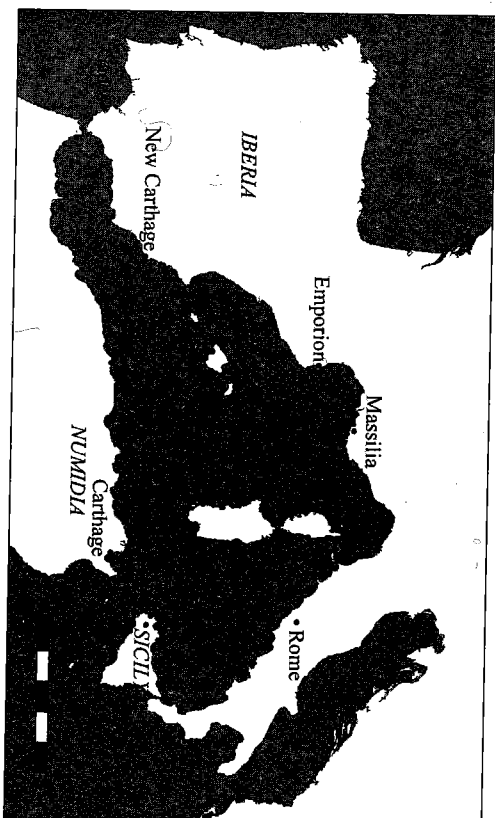
Aristotle includes Carthage as the only non-Greek state in his *Politics*, and even treats Carthage, alongside Sparta and Crete, as a *polis* approximating to his ideal.

Carthage also had close relations with the Italian peninsula from the sixth century BC onwards. Three inscribed gold plaques, two in Etruscan and one in Phoenician, from a sanctuary at Pyrgi, a port of the Etruscan city of Caere, and dating to about 500 BC, are especially illuminating. They record donations to the sanctuary by one Thefarie: probably a gift of a statue and also of a temple. In the two Etruscan texts, Thefarie is identified as the ruler of Caere. He made the donations as a thank-offering to the Etruscan goddess Uni, the main deity of the sanctuary (whom the Romans called Juno), who had helped him to rule for three years. So far, this fits comfortably into the picture of Etruscan cities sketched earlier. Indeed, Thefarie may be the immediate predecessor of one of the people mentioned in one of the texts from Tarquinii. It is startling that the third gold plaque is written in Phoenician, perhaps Cypriot Phoenician, and is a parallel version of one of the two Etruscan texts. This must be because Thefarie wished to express his gratitude to the deity of Pyrgi in both his own and the deity's language. The Phoenician version refers to the goddess as Astarte, the Phoenician deity, and places the donation 'on the day of the burying of the god', namely the Phoenician deity Adonis, the consort of Astarte. Even in the parallel Etruscan text, the goddess Uni is referred to as Uni-Astra, the Etruscan form of Astarte. Phoenician impact on Etruria ran deep. Uni-Astra owed her Phoenician origins to the importance of Phoenician Cypriot and especially Carthaginian traders with Caere, for whom the sanctuary at Pyrgi served as a neutral meeting ground. Aristotle mentions in his *Politics* a trading agreement between the Carthaginians and the Etruscans, in which the two sides unusually treated each other like citizens of one city. A luxury ivory 'calling card', dating to 530–500 BC, has been excavated in Carthage, on which a merchant introduced himself in Etruscan simply as 'Puinel of Carthage'. We can imagine the Carthaginian merchant, whose spoken Etruscan was not fluent, showing his 'calling card' on first meeting an Etruscan fellow-merchant.

These close links between Carthage and Etruria are the context for the first formal connection between Carthage and Rome. In the first year of the Republic (507 BC), Carthage struck a treaty with Rome, and perhaps also with other, Etruscan states: the two sides agreed to be friends

and not to act against each other's interests. The Carthaginians promised not to meddle with Rome's Latin allies, not to build a fort in Latium, nor to overturn an army there. The Romans promised only not to sail past 'the Fair Promontory' (just north-west of Carthage), and to follow certain conditions when trading with Carthage or Sardinia, specified because of its Phoenician settlements; Rome, however, was free to trade in the Carthaginian zone of western Sicily on the same terms as anyone else. Rome, the junior partner to this treaty, with no overseas military ambitions, was excluded from trading with Carthaginian colonies along the North African coast to the west of Carthage, and had specific restrictions imposed on its trading activities in core Carthaginian areas. In 348 BC a new treaty was struck between the two states. Rome was still treated as primarily a power in Latium, but Carthage sought now both to prevent, not merely to control, Roman trade with Sardinia and North Africa, and also to rule out Roman colonization there. This is the first hint of Rome's ambitions of overseas expansion, which would bring Rome and Carthage into conflict, and which would lead to Rome's expansion into the Greek world.

Explanations of the extraordinary growth of Roman power have been sought ever since antiquity. Polybius, a Greek patriot who came to know Rome from the inside, wrote a history of Rome's rise to power. His primary interest was in how Rome came to conquer the Greek world, in only fifty-three years, from 220 BC to the ending of the Macedonian monarchy in 167 BC. This conquest was not done 'in a fit of absence of mind', as was once said of British imperialism; even if Rome did not herself trigger particular wars, and indeed took pains not to initiate 'unjust wars', Rome's military actions were not simply defensive. Over time it developed the aim of universal dominion, which was underpinned by the peculiar strengths of its constitution. To this Polybian view of Roman expansion, we might want to add various causes which operated at a less conscious level: the need for individual senators to gain military glory in order to advance their careers, as with the Scipios; the financial incentives for both the elite and people of Rome to engage in warfare; and the need for Rome to levy and to employ its allies' manpower in the field each year, or else in effect remit taxation for that year, and in the long run risk losing the medium which held together Rome and its allies. These causes, operating at a deep level of the structures of the Roman state, resulted in a constant pressure towards regular warfare.



Map 25. The western Mediterranean in the third and second centuries BC.

From a conscious Roman point of view, the explanation of Roman growth was much simpler. Romans held that their extraordinary success and prosperity were due to their uniquely close relations with the gods. In a telling letter of 193 BC, the Roman authorities replied to a request by the people of Teos (a Greek city on the west coast of Asia Minor) that they accept that the city and its territory be declared 'holy' and that the honours for the chief deity of Teos, Dionysus, be enhanced. The Romans gave a key reason for their decision: 'the fact that we have, absolutely and consistently, placed reverence towards the gods as of the first importance is proved by the favour which we have received from them on this account.' This fact the Romans believed to be well known to everybody. They saw themselves as fighting only 'just wars', and their victories as being due to the ongoing piety of the Romans towards the gods. People at the time and subsequently argued that there was more than this to Roman expansion, but this self-estimation of the Romans needs to be added to our explanations of what came to pass.

Major conflict between Rome and Carthage, the First Punic War, broke out in 264 BC. The trigger was trivial, but the struggle soon escalated to become one whose prize was control over all of Sicily, where the Carthaginians had long had their zone. In an early phase of the war, Segesta, a town in the Carthaginian zone of western Sicily, decided to massacre its Carthaginian garrison and go over to the Romans. The Segestans were influenced in this dangerous decision by their kinship

with the Romans: they too were descended from Aeneas. A Segestran claim that their city had been founded by refugees from Troy is found as early as the fifth century BC. Here it has particular force because they knew it would dovetail with the Romans' own claim about themselves, and it was to be repeated by Segesta on two coin issues in the first century BC.

Roman victory over Carthage and its ally Syracuse in 241 BC led to a humiliating peace for Carthage, and Roman expropriation of Sicily as its first overseas province. It is easy for us to see the First Punic War as a struggle between the two great western powers, driven by their own immediate imperatives. One of the combatants on the Roman side saw things rather differently. Naevius, in the first Latin epic on a Roman topic, a historical poem on the First Punic War, set the war in a much wider perspective. The poem began with the Romans fighting in Sicily, but then moved back in time, perhaps triggered by the Roman commander seeing representations of myths on a temple in Sicily. About a third of the poem was then set in the remote past, before returning to the present war: Aeneas fleeing Troy; Aeneas in Carthage, and there meeting the Carthaginian queen; and Aeneas reaching Italy, a story which Virgil would develop in his *Aeneid*. The narrative of the war was thus set against a background of history in which Rome had a mission to succeed, but where conflict between Rome and Carthage was not inevitable.

### Flaubert's *Salammô*

When Flaubert's *Salammô* appeared, in 1862, readers were eagerly awaiting a successor to his wildly popular *Madame Bovary*. They were somewhat frustrated by a historical novel set in ancient Carthage. In 1857, Flaubert, who had long been fascinated by 'the orient', started obsessively reading an incredible range of ancient authors and modern scholarship, more than 100 books in total, including a 400-page treatise on a particular type of cypress for use in his description of the temple courtyard. He took reams of notes, but got bogged down and in 1858 made a trip to Carthage and other places in Tunisia and Algeria, which made him entirely rethink the novel. After publication, Flaubert vigorously defended himself against charges of inaccuracy, while admitting that he took a few minor liberties. In fact, *Salammô*, though based on a story in Polybius, abandoned

Polybius' sympathy for the Carthaginians in favour of a highly complex representation of an alien, and very violent, society. Flaubert set his story not in the grand narrative of conflict with Rome, but in the aftermath of the First Punic War, when Carthage's mercenaries revolted. The narrative was driven by a love affair between the leader of the mercenaries and a Carthaginian priestess, Salammô. The novel might look as though it is a straightforward example of western 'Orientalism', in which representatives of western colonizing powers represented the 'orient' as exotically 'other', in such a way as to make it knowable and controllable. In fact, Flaubert avoided any easy hooks for the reader, such as noble representatives of Rome, or wise Greek philosophers, and instead set out to depict a remote society, using unfamiliar vocabulary, and almost no direct speech. The vast learning paraded before the reader did not help, and the French language proved to be a poor tool for mastering the alien nature of Carthage.

The problems of how to represent Carthage have not disappeared. Some modern scholars scarcely seek to escape from the perspective of the Roman victors, who stereotyped the Carthaginians as notorious for their perfidy. Others, who wish to be sympathetic, ignore the evidence of the 'tophets'. Yet others are led, by the fact that Punic is a Semitic language, into racist claims, comparing Carthaginian literature unfavourably with that of another Semitic people, the Jews. Until the last few decades, the struggle between Rome and Carthage was often seen as a racist struggle between Indo-Europeans and Semites for control of the western Mediterranean. Flaubert's novel, though unpopular at the time and little read today, avoids those obvious traps, and poses for us a real challenge.

After the First Punic War Carthage attempted to secure its position in North Africa and to create one in Iberia. A leading Carthaginian family established itself in Iberia, founding New Carthage (modern Cartagena), which had the best harbour on the Mediterranean coast of Iberia. In the seventh and sixth centuries BC Phoenician colonies had lined the southern coast of Iberia, but they had faded in the fifth century. In their place developed an indigenous, urban civilization, in close contact with the Greeks. A document inscribed in Greek on a lead tablet of the later fifth century BC recorded the purchase of a ship by a Greek merchant at the Greek town of Emporion in the north-east of Iberia; the transaction was witnessed by three men with Iberian names. The same lead tablet had

previously been used to record in Etruscan a transaction by two Etruscan merchants at 'Matalia', that is Massilia, which illustrates neatly the complexity of economic life in this period. Through such means, the local Iberian elites imported huge amounts of Greek pottery and other artefacts. Like the Etruscans, the Iberians made use of the Greek imports for their own purposes; they created a local style of sculpture, based on Greek models (Plate 17); and an Iberian script, inspired by Ionic Greek. It was this region which the Carthaginians attempted to take over, and which formed the basis for the next conflict with Rome.

The Second Punic War broke out in 218 BC, when Hannibal, starting from New Carthage, launched a surprise attack on Italy, marching over the Alps with his elephants. In three successive years he defeated Roman armies three times; much of southern Italy and Syracuse, the largest city in Sicily, defected to the Carthaginians. But central and northern Italy remained loyal to Rome, and in the end the Romans broke back. The Carthaginians were defeated in Italy, and again in North Africa in 202 BC. As a result, the Carthaginians were confined to central North Africa, and over the next two hundred years Rome went on to fight for control of all of Iberia. The Carthaginians had posed the greatest threat to Rome's seemingly inexorable rise to domination of the Mediterranean world. That is why Polybius chose this point to describe the balance between the three elements of the Roman constitution as the source of the strength that carried them through to final victory.

Rome's ally Massilia was caught up in this war. Its prosperity had been hit in the fourth and third centuries BC, because its trading routes to the north had been disrupted by the emergence of La Tène Celts, but its traders remained active elsewhere. An Egyptian papyrus records a maritime loan of 200-150 BC relating to a voyage to the 'Scent-Producing Land' of the Somali coast: the partners were Greek Egyptians and a trader from Massilia; the guarantors of the loan included another man from Massilia, as well as a Carthaginian and someone from Italy. The international interconnections were here even greater than those seen in the earlier lead tablet. During the Second Punic War Massilia won a naval victory with the Romans over the Carthaginians, which the city commemorated in true Greek style by dedicating a statue of Apollo in the sanctuary at Delphi.

During this war Rome probably continued to present itself as a Trojan foundation, in the face of a foreign foe. In 217 BC, after the second of Hannibal's crushing defeats of the Romans, the Senate tried to appease

the gods by building two new temples on the Capitol, one to Mens ('Mind'), the other to Venus Erycina ('Venus of Eryx'). Introducing a deity from Eryx, on the north-west corner of Sicily, needs explanation, especially as the cult there included the un-Roman practice of temple prostitution. Certainly later and probably at the time, the cult had Trojan associations: founded by Eryx, a son of Aphrodite (Latin: Venus), it had been visited by Aeneas, another son of Aphrodite, and the Trojan foundation of Segesta was nearby. The Romans probably wished to make the most of these associations by building a temple to Venus Erycina in the heart of Rome.

Roman historians in the late third and early second centuries BC certainly set the recent past in a long historical context. Fabius Pictor, a leading senator, who composed a history of Rome in the late third century BC, began with the stories of Hercules and Evander, and of Aeneas and the founding of Alba Longa, and continued with the much later events of Romulus, Remus and the founding of Rome in 748 BC. That is, he sought to reconcile the early date established by Eratosthenes for the Trojan War with a much later date for the foundation of Rome; this became the canonical solution, but not immediately. The work passed quite rapidly through the regal period and the early Republic, but ended with a detailed history from the First to the Second Punic War. Pictor is sometimes described as the first Roman historian, which is somewhat unfair to Naevius, and obscures the fact that Pictor wrote in Greek. Pictor, like other upper-class Romans, was bilingual in Latin and Greek, but wrote in Greek, not for a Greek audience, but for a Roman audience which would appreciate his borrowings from the sophisticated tradition of Greek historical writing.

Ennius was a rather different figure. Coming from southern Italy, he claimed descent from Messapus, the founder of the local Messapian people, and boasted that he had 'three hearts', because he spoke Oscan, Greek and Latin (in which he wrote). Though he was an outsider to Rome, leading Romans acted as his patrons, with the Scipios including a statue of him outside their family tomb. The first section of his verse history, the *Annals* (written in the 180s and 170s BC), covered, predictably enough, Aeneas, Romulus and the other kings of Rome, but Romulus, as also in Naevius, is here the grandson of Aeneas, thus eliminating the long years of the kings of Alba Longa who filled the gap between the Trojan War and the date for the founding of Rome. The second section



covered the Republican period down to the early third century BC. The remaining two-thirds of the work covered the century down to his own day, omitting the First Punic War, which had already been described by Naevius. It ended with the defeat of Macedon in 197 BC, victory over the Aetolians in north-west Greece in 187 BC, and subsequent wars down into the early 170s BC.

Carthage had prospered after the Second Punic War, being described by the contemporary Polybius as 'the richest city in the world', despite its geographical and political constraints (Plate 18). But Carthage's attack on its western neighbour Massinissa of Numidia, an ally of Rome, meant that Rome now had the opportunity for declaring a just war on Carthage in 149 BC, namely the Third Punic War. The Roman politician Cato had made great play of alleged Carthaginian atrocities, and also wrote of Elissa founding Carthage; like Naevius, he saw the conflict in a long perspective. In 146 BC Carthage was defeated, and the leader's wife immolated herself, showing the enduring power of the memory of Elissa within Carthage itself. The deities of the great city were summoned to Rome, and Carthage was 'devoted' to the gods of the underworld. This infernal dedication of the city had remote precedent in the treatment of some towns in Italy, including Veii, but it had no precedent outside Italy. The city walls were dismantled, roofs removed, making the buildings unusable, and the population sold into slavery. Spoil that the Carthaginians had removed from Akragas in Sicily in 405 BC was restored to its rightful owners. There is a widespread modern story that in addition salt was ploughed into Carthage's soil to make it infertile, but that story was simply invented by a historian writing in 1930. By 125 BC Rome had started to assign the territory of Carthage to its own citizens and in 122 BC Roman settlers were sent to Carthage, but the centre of the city was left vacant for a century after its destruction.

Meanwhile, in the east, the mainland Greeks revolted against Rome in 147 BC, but this was in vain. In reprisal, in 146 BC the Romans sacked the ancient city of Corinth and subjected many cities of mainland Greece to Roman rule. Corinth suffered the same fate of dedication to the gods of the underworld as Carthage; its statues and paintings were removed for display in Rome, in the victorious cities of Italy, in the Panhellenic sanctuaries of Greece, and even in some individual Greek cities, thereby incorporating memory into new contexts.

\*

The long-standing conflict between Carthage and Rome had consequences for the way the world was conceptualized. Since at least the fifth century BC the world had been divided into three continents: Europe, Asia and Libya. Herodotus had disparaged the size and importance of Libya in comparison with Europe, on geographical grounds, and there was a long-standing political polarity between Europe and Asia. The wars between Rome and Carthage in the third and second centuries BC weakened the old polarity. Libya took on a fresh importance, and also acquired a new name. In 146 BC the Romans called the conquered Carthaginian territory 'Africa', probably adopting a local name, while avoiding reference to the Poeni. 'Africa' became the usual Latin word not only for the new province but also for the whole third continent.

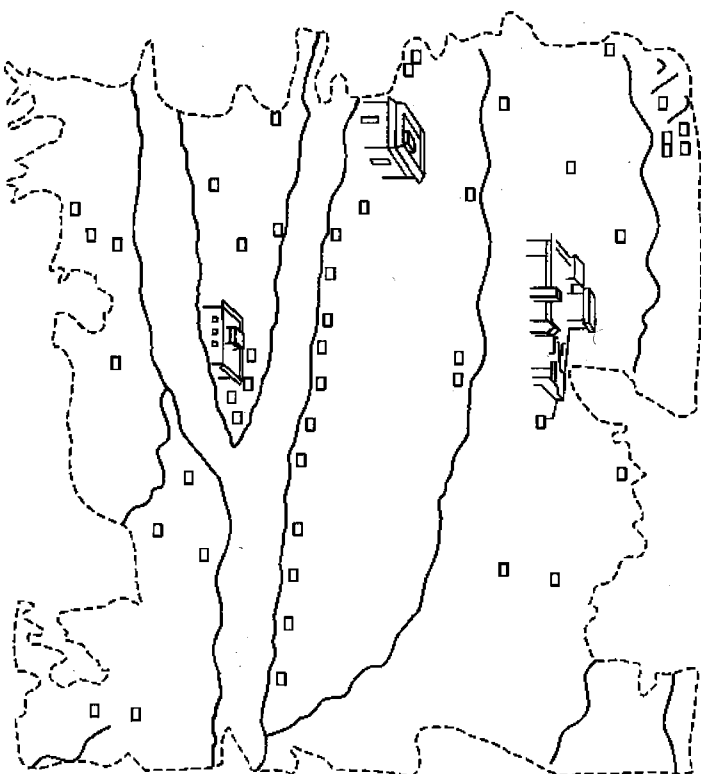


Figure 24. Drawing of part of the map of Iberia in the Artemidorus papyrus. Running across the centre is a wide river, indicated by two parallel lines, joined by a second river. At the junction is a walled town; there are two other walled towns above it. The single lines, probably roads rather than rivers, are flanked by small settlements, indicated by rectangular boxes.

Knowledge of Europe also changed. The Greeks had had little interest in the inhabitants of the inland areas of Iberia and middle Europe, despite long-standing patterns of trade with coastal areas. Massilia, for example, had not served as a channel for the communication of knowledge about the Celts to other Greeks. Pytheas' writings about his far-flung travels to Britain and further north did not include anything about the inland Celts. Roman conquests, in the aftermath of the Second Punic War, began to change this, much as the conquests of Alexander the Great had opened up new stretches of Asia to Greek enquiry. Polybius travelled twice to Iberia and to the sea beyond with his Roman patron, at least as far as southern France, and was given ships by his patron to explore the coast of North Africa. As a result, he was able to describe these regions in a way that no previous author had done, making geography an intrinsic part of history. Such exploration was made possible by Roman expansion, but knowledge thereby acquired also served to consolidate Roman power. Around 100 BC, a Greek scholar, Artemidorus of Ephesus (in western Asia Minor), wrote extensively on the coast, including the Atlantic coast, of Iberia as part of his geography of the world. A hundred or so years later the section on Iberia was illustrated with a very detailed map of at least part of Iberia, including considerable detail on the inland settlements (see Figure 24). In this map, Artemidorus' knowledge, derived as a result of Roman conquest, was complemented with further details of the new Roman world: large towns, roads and smaller settlements. Iberia was now in Roman hands. As we shall see in the next chapter, Roman expansion in middle Europe in the first century BC had similar consequences for the growth of knowledge.

The grand narrative of the period from 500 to 146 BC is clear: Rome's expansion within Italy south of the Arno by 264 BC; its wars with Carthage; and its conquest of most of the Greek world in Polybius' famous fifty-three years between 220 and 167 BC. The two story-lines of Rome's external expansion converge with the destructions of both Carthage and Corinth in 146 BC, events which serve as a neat sign of the supremacy of Rome in the Mediterranean world. Thereafter no state west of the Euphrates had the resources to offer sustained resistance to further Roman expansion. This grand narrative has to be seen in the context of the perspectives on the past held by Romans, Italians and Carthaginians. Beliefs and debates about early histories and traditions helped to shape how individual states developed and interacted.

## 7

## Rome, Italy and Empire:

146 BC-AD 14

Most Gauls, even down to the present day, sleep on the ground, and eat their meals seated on beds of straw. Their food is very abundant, and includes milk and flesh of all sorts, but particularly the flesh of hogs, both fresh and salted. Their hogs actually live outdoors, and they are of exceptional height, strength and speed; it is certainly dangerous for a person unfamiliar with them to approach them, and likewise even for a wolf. As for the Gauls' houses, which are large and dome-shaped, they make them of planks and wattle, covering them with a thatched roof.

That is how the Greek geographer Strabo, writing early in the first century AD, describes the people of central Gaul. It is a striking picture of a primitive people, living an un-Mediterranean life in curiously shaped and constructed houses, their economy dominated by savage hogs, capable of killing even wolves. Strabo says explicitly that his account of the Gauls is drawn mainly from the time before they were conquered by Julius Caesar. At first sight, his account makes the Gauls seem like the inhabitants of Silesiuchy in north-central Poland a millennium earlier. In fact, Strabo is very well aware of the changed world in which the Gauls are living. They supplied specially woven cloth from their flocks of sheep and salt meat from the hogs not only to Rome, but also to other parts of Italy. Unlike the inhabitants of Silesiuchy, who had no long-distance connections at all, the Gauls were tied into a long-distance trading system.

This chapter moves from the mid-second century BC, when the Gauls were independent of Rome, to the organization of the Roman provinces towards the end of the first century BC. The area under Roman rule grew hugely over this period, both in the west and in the east. The growth of Roman territory had major consequences for how that territory was administered and conceptualized. But we begin by picking up the issue