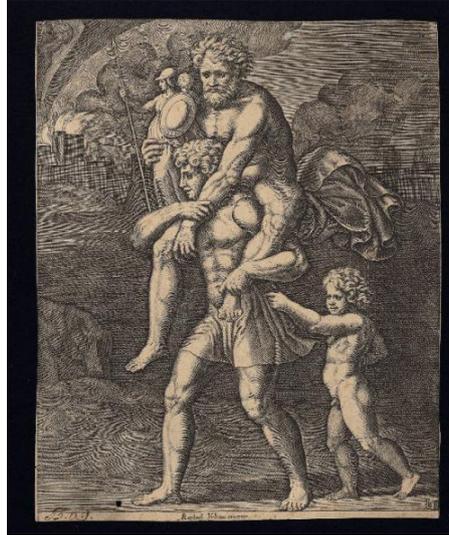




18. The Origins of Rome

When the Greeks conquered and destroyed Troy with fire, Æneas had escaped it taking with him both the images of protective Deities of the city and the simulacra of the Ancestors. After crossing the sea among a thousand dangers, the Trojan prince landed on the shore of Latium, a region of central Italy.



1. Æneas escapes Troy with Julus, his father and the images of the Trojan Gods

There, the ancient God Saturn had once taken refuge after being overthrown by his son Jupiter, at the beginning of the Silver Age. Saturn, the King of the Gods of the Gold Age remained hidden and continued to rule in that part of Italy: in fact, Latium means “latent”, “concealed” and there, thanks to Saturn’s presence, the Gold Age continued for many more centuries without the neighbouring peoples which were already involved in the decadence of the Silver, Bronze and Iron cycles, being aware of it.



2. Saturn, God of the Gold Age and first King of Latium

With the change of time, Saturn became a wise man, the King of the Latins, who maintained his kingdom in utmost prosperity and peace. At his death he was succeeded by a dynasty of sovereigns, and at the time when Aeneas arrived in Latium the King of the Latins was Latinus. The Trojan hero was welcomed with great generosity by the local population and took the daughter of the King as his spouse. The arrival of ships loaded with Trojan warriors, however, attracted the hostility of the other Italian populations, who felt threatened. Therefore Aeneas had to engage in a war, finally managing to pacify



all of Latium. Trojans and Latins fraternized, founding a new nation. The son of Aeneas, Julus¹, decided to found a new city that would become the capital of his Latin-Trojan kingdom. He was miraculously lead on the site of the city's foundation by a white female of wild boar, confirming the hyperborean origins of his tradition. The images of the Trojan Gods and ancestors were kept in a temple: thus the new city of Albalonga (the Great White one) ritually became the second Troy.



3- Mars and Rea Silvia

After some generations Amulius, the usurper of the throne of Albalonga, obliged his niece Rea Silvia to become a priestess of the Goddess Vesta. For he wanted her to remain a virgin. In fact a prophecy had predicted that Amulius would have been killed by the sons of Rea Silvia. But Rea Silvia was visited in the temple of Vesta by Mars, God of war, and gave birth to two twins, Romulus and Remus. The usurper King ordered the death of his niece and the twins to be abandoned to the course of the Tiber River. However the two infants were rescued and nursed by a she-wolf.



4. The she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus

When they became adults, Romulus and Remus killed Amulius and decided to found a new city: Rome. Both brothers became contenders to the throne of the new city, but finally Romulus killed Remus and assumed power. Romulus divided his subjects into two categories: patricians and plebeians.

¹ From Julus the *gens* Julia (name of a clan, sskr. *gotra*) descended that later was represented by important figures like Julius Cesar and the first Roman Emperors.





5. Patricians and plebeians

The patricians were the caste providing priests, warriors and all the public offices to the State. The plebeians were divided into three subcategories: the knights (*equites*), who made up the flanks of the army formed by the patricians; the free men (*liberi*), who were traders, farmers and artisans; and the class of slaves (*servi*), who served as servants to the other three upper classes. While the patricians were such by birth, some upward or downward shifts could take place among the other three classes. For example, if the deeds of certain slaves were noble, they could be freed by their masters to become part of free men. The insolvent debtors, on the other hand, could decay on the level of slaves and become commodity of a master. The patrician family (*patricia familia*) was formed by the father of the family (*pater familias*) and the *matrona*, his wife, by their children, by less important relatives, by artisans, peasants, clerks and servants of the family called *clientes*. The *pater familias*, even if he had no public priestly office, was the priest of his own family, and therefore performed the sacrifices to the Gods and the cult to the Ancestors. And he was also the King of his family, with the power of life and death over its members.



6. The Roman Senate (*Senatus Romanus*)

All the families (*kula*) descending from the same ancestor formed a *gens* (*gotra*). So a patrician (*patricius*) had his own name, the surname of his family and the name of the gens. Romulus had founded Rome welcoming people coming from three different Italic populations, the Latins, the Sabins and the Etruscans. Therefore, the whole Roman population was divided into three communities (*Tribus*, i.e. triple division): the *Rammes* of Latin origin, the *Tities*, of Sabine origin, the *Luceres*, of Etruscan origin. Each tribe (*tribus*) was composed by the four castes described above. The representative of a tribe before the King (*Rex*) was the *tribunus* and his seat was the *tribunal*. Each tribe elected a hundred patrician elders, and these three hundred senators (*senatores*) elaborated the laws and presented them to the King for approval. The *Rex* was the supreme priest, the head of State and the chief of the Army.



The first King, Romulus, was mostly a Warlord who, since the foundation of the city, imparted the warrior nature to his nation, which would become its principal feature throughout Roman history. The Romans were a people of warriors, disciplined, loyal, stern, courageous and with a high sense of justice. They did not indulge so much in speculation and philosophy as the Greeks did.



7. King Numa and his wife the Nymph Egeria

Remus and Romulus represent the mythical pair of twins of which one is mortal and the other is immortal, like Nara and Nārāyaṇa in India and the Dioscures twins in Greece. In fact, Romulus, at the apogee of his glory, was assumed into heaven with his body and became the God Quirinus. For this reason the inhabitants of Rome were also known as *Quirites*. Romulus is the first of the seven Kings of the city. His successor was Numa, the legislator and the founder of Roman Religion². Numa was a disciple of Pythagoras and reformed the ancient Trojan-Latin Religion on the basis of the Pythagorean doctrine. He was assisted in his venture by his wife, the Goddess Egeria.



8. The two-faced God Janus

First of all, Numa built the temple to the God Janus, the God of doors, of knowledge, of initiation, the remover of obstacle (similar to Ganeśa). The first month of the year was called *Januarius* in honour of this God, today's January. Numa consecrated the Roman State to three principal deities: Jupiter, a priestly God, Mars, a warrior God, and Quirinus (Romulus), God-ancestor of the inhabitants of Rome.

² It is interesting that Numa is an anagram of the name of Manu.



9. Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus

He then entrusted the worship of such three Gods to three orders of *sacerdotes* (priests) called *flamina* (which has the same etymology of the sskr. *brāhmaṇa*), to whom he delegated his power as King of the sacred (*Rex sacrorum*). The worship of Vesta, the Goddess of the sacred ever lit fire in the temple dedicated to the Roman-Latin-Trojan Ancestors, remained central. He also established a luni-solar calendar of twelve months, specifying the favourable dates for animal sacrifices, vegetable oblations, and festivals in honour of the Gods.



10. Rome. Temple of Goddess Vesta (*Templum Vestæ*)

For the popular cult he instituted the minor priestly order of the pontiffs headed by the Maximum Pontiff (*Pontifex Maximus*). *Pontifex* means "bridging" between men and Gods (the same concept of *tīrthaṅkara*). Until the end of the Empire, all Roman priests had to be of patrician descent. The Roman patricians (*patricii*) received the initiation from the Orphic-Pythagorean Mysteries, of which we have already spoken on this Website. Similarly the matrons (*matronæ*), received the initiation from the Mysteries of the *Bona Dea* (Good Goddess) reserved only to women. In the forty years of Numa's reign the bellicose city of Rome always remained at peace.

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