**Rome’s Mythical Foundation**

***Aeneas***, *a survivor from Troy, comes to Italy after a long journey. His descendents, the twin brothers* ***Romulus*** *and Remus, found the city. After Remus is killed in a brotherly dispute, the city is named after Romulus.*

**753 BC** The traditional date of the foundation of Rome.

509 BC The last of the “Seven Kings of Rome”, Tarquinius Superbus (the Proud) is killed. This marks the beginning of the **Roman Republic**.

**The Punic Wars: Rome at the Brink of Disaster**

*The Punic wars were a series of wars fought against Rome’s main rival,* ***Carthage****. Carthage was a civilization based in north Africa (modern day Tunisia). As a trading empire, their colonies stretched to southern Spain. The Romans called the Carthaginians “Punici”, which is why the wars are called Punic.* *This conflict is the defining crisis of the Roman Republic.*

264 - 241 BC 1st Punic War. Carthage is defeated and loses its colonies in Spain and Sicily.

218 - 201 BC **2nd Punic War.** The Carthaginian general **Hannibal** invades and nearly conquers Italy after the battle of **Cannae**. Eventually, the Roman general **Scipio Africanus** wins the war for Rome.

149 - 147 BC 3rd Punic War. Carthage is completely destroyed and Roman dominance is established in the western Mediterranean.

**The Social Wars and the Rise of Powerful Generals**

*This period of time is marked by intense civil strife and rebellions in Italy, which are put down by powerful generals.* ***Gaius Marius*** *is elected as consul 6 times in a row, starting a dangerous precedent.*

91 - 88 BC The **Social War**. Roman allies (*socii*) in Italy rebel.

- Lucius **Sulla** becomes distinguished.

88 - 82 BC The rivalry between **Marius** and **Sulla** culminates with Sulla marching his army to Rome and declaring himself *dictator*. Sulla eventually retires and dies in peace in 78 B.C.

**The 1st Triumvirate**

*After the deaths of* ***Marius*** *and* ***Sulla****, there is a power vacuum in Rome*.

60 BC **Caesar, Pompey** and **Crassus** form a political alliance known as the **1st Triumvirate**.

- After Crassus dies in Persia, rivalry between Pompey and Caesar leads to civil war.

49 - 45 BC Caesar **crosses the Rubicon** and invades Rome. He is declared dictator for life.

- *alea iacta est*, “the die has been cast”

**44 BC** Caesar is assassinated by a conspiracy of senators.

**The Rise of Octavius**

*After Caesar’s death, Octavius (his nephew) is posthumously adopted. He changes his name to Octavianus and forms an alliance with Caesar’s former allies*.

43 BC The **2nd Triumvirate** is formed by Octavian, Marcus Antonius, and Gaius Lepidus.

31 BC Octavian defeats Antony at the battle of **Actium**.

**27 BC** Octavian declares himself **Augustus** (“revered one”). This date marks the beginning of the Roman empire.

- Other titles of Octavian:

- **Princeps** (“first man”, and where we get our “prince”)

- ***Primus inter pares*** (“first among equals”)

- **Pater patriae** (“father of the fatherland”)

**The Roman Empire** (*Imperium Romanum*)

- Two main stages:

- The **Principate** (27 BC - AD 284)

- The **Dominate** (AD 284 - AD 641)

AD 380 Christianity is adopted as the state religion of the empire.

AD 395 Empire is split into Western (ruled from Italy) and Eastern (ruled from Constantinople) halves.

**The Endings of Rome:**

AD 476 Traditional date of the “Fall of Rome”, when Rome is sacked and the last Western emperor is deposed by Odoacer.

AD 641 The Eastern Roman Empire is attacked by the newly-united Arab tribes and suffers major losses, losing Egypt, the Levant and large parts of Anatolia (modern-day Turkey).

After this period, the Roman Empire is known to historians as the **Byzantine Empire**.

AD 1453 The last emperor is killed during the sack of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire. Even at this point the emperor’s official title was still “Emperor of the Romans” - the term “Byzantine Empire” was invented recently.