



The Foundation of Rome

Italian 156:
Exploring Rome

The Legend of Rome

- ❖ Founded April 21, 753 BC / BCE
- ❖ Aeneas, son of Venus; flees the fall of Troy for Italy with Ascanius, his son
- ❖ Generations later, Amulius vs. Numitor; brothers, Amulius usurps
- ❖ Rhea (+ Mars), twins, Romulus and Remus; abandoned on bank of Tiber
- ❖ Nursed by *la Lupa*; eventually discovered by shepherds
- ❖ They found a city; 12 birds vs. 6 birds; Romulus digs a *fossa* to mark the outlines; Remus leaps over it; Romulus kills him for it











The Legend of Rome

- ❖ The “rape of the Sabine women” (note the word “rape” meant “theft” or “abduction” until quite recently) as another foundational moment
- ❖ Rome would relentlessly assimilate, taking religion, customs, art, literature and making it their own (see Hughes, 26: conquered people kept their customs, religion, territory, magistrates)
- ❖ They simultaneously ‘ex-similated,’ as it were; everyone they touched became (at least potentially) Roman





“...a kernel of symbolic truth. Rome and its culture were not ‘pure.’ They were never produced by a single ethnically homogenous people... Celts, Arabs, Jews and Greeks, among others, were included under the wide umbrella of Romanitas.”

– *Hughes, p. 18*

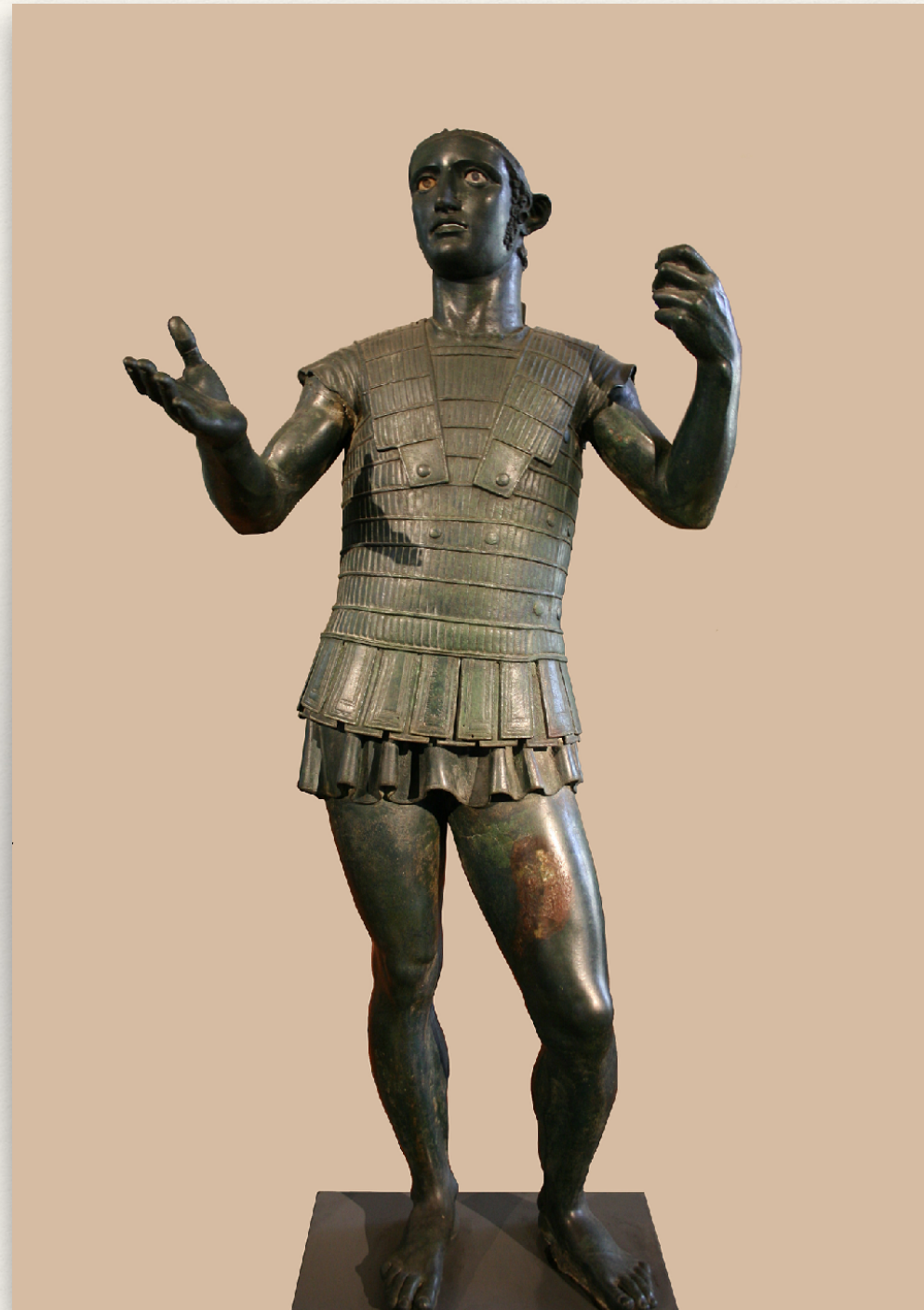
Diverse Rome

- ❖ Among those “many others” are people from far outside what is understood as “Europe” today, included many people from Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- ❖ Can we speak of Rome as “multicultural”? Imperial Rome had the habit of conquering, and conferring Roman citizenship on those they conquered.
- ❖ Post-racial and pre-racial thinking
- ❖ Many other people also lived in Latium and central Italy already, most especially the *Etruscans*



The Etruscans

- ❖ No one knows quite where they came from; they vanished gradually, during Roman times, probably absorbed in the expanding Roman culture (*Tuscan* is related to *Etruscan*); we know their alphabet, but not their language
- ❖ Very influential on ancient Roman culture (Romans were culture-starved): April, the calendar (kalends), first name and family name, religion, art, and more (the segmented arch!), the *fasces*, the word “person”









SARCOPHAGUS OF THE SPOUSES

EUPHONIOUS KRATER



THE CHIMAERA OF AREZZO



Cerveteri,
Etruscan City of the Dead

(Necropolis)





















Roman Rule

- ❖ Clear hierarchy: free vs. slave, citizen vs. non-citizen, man vs. woman/child (these are all person vs. nonperson)
- ❖ *Patria potestas* (marriage, divorce, 'exposure,' disown, sell, or kill)
- ❖ Patrician vs. plebeian (*clientes*)
- ❖ Two (patrician) *consules* (consuls), one Pontifex Maximus (pont. max.)
- ❖ Discuss: *religio*, *pontifex*
- ❖ Later, plebeian *tribunes* were added (also with veto power)
- ❖ *Invisible Romans*, Robert Knapp







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Roman Rule

- ❖ 326 BC: 10,000 sq. km; 200 BC: 360,000 sq. km.; 146 BC: 80,000; 50 BC: 2 million
- ❖ By about 350 BC, all of Latium (Lazio) was Roman
- ❖ Not a democracy, but an understanding that Rome = government plus the people. Hence, the symbol of Rome even today: SPQR: *Senatus PopulusQue Romanus*
- ❖ Solo Preti Qui Regnano; Scusi, il Prezzo di Questa Ricotta? and Sono Pazzi, Questi Romani



Roman Religion

- ❖ *Pius* (one who is attentive, devoted to religion), but *religio* means custom, tradition, devotion to duty and family
- ❖ Before they steal the Greek religion, Roman religion was animistic, with spirits (*numina*) everywhere, especially in houses and land (*lares* and *penates*); superstitious, many taboos
- ❖ Augury, divination, haruspication: a central part of piety and religion



Roman Law

- ❖ *Lex, legis*. By 450 BC, the Twelve Tables, the beginning of a legal code; it was to be written down, so people couldn't just make stuff up
- ❖ By Imperial Rome, there really was something like a coherent legal code that tried to imagine how to resolve any dispute; *possession* was the most important issue to be resolved; a person was essentially defined as one who could possess
- ❖ Remained essentially the law in Europe until the 19th century
- ❖ Concepts include the veto, checks and balances, separation of powers, the notion of "quorum," impeachment, the powers of the purse, term limits, and scheduled elections
- ❖ The notion of *res publica*, or Republic



Roman War

- ❖ The Second Punic War (218-202):
 - ❖ *Carthago delenda est*
 - ❖ Hannibal and his elephants
 - ❖ Cannae (50,000 fatalities in one day; equal to US losses in the entire Vietnam War); Zama
 - ❖ The upshot: Rome rules the Mediterranean
- ❖ Lots of details about the impressive Roman military (*gladius* → gladiator, centurion), types of soldiers, equipment, etc.
- ❖ Two fun linguistic facts: *soldatus* and salary come from the same root



Julius Caesar

- ❖ Public speaker and military leader
- ❖ Aristocratic family, but aligned with the *populares*, not *optimates*
- ❖ Conquered Gaul: $\frac{1}{3}$ men killed, $\frac{1}{3}$ sold into slavery; Rome was Mediterranean—now European
- ❖ His main enemy Pompey prepares to prosecute him if he returns to Rome; Caesar crosses the Rubicon with his troops; Pompey flees
- ❖ 44 BC becomes dictator for life; renames Quintilis “July” (*Julius*)
- ❖ Betrayed by two old friends, Cassius and Brutus, assassinated in the Senate
- ❖ Caesar’s only male relative, Octavian, eventually emerges from the civil war as Rome’s first Emperor. He names himself Augustus.

