

CLASSICAL FAX*:

ROMA AETERNA

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**ACCORDING TO TRADITION, ANCIENT
ROME WAS FOUNDED ON APRIL 21
– ANTE.DIEM.XI.KALENDAS.**

MAIAS – IN 753 B.C./B.C.E.

[11 DAYS BEFORE THE KALENDS OF MAY]

**SOURCE: *OXFORD CLASSICAL
DICTIONARY* (2003)**

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THE TROJAN PRINCE AENEAS, WHO ESCAPED TROY WITH HIS FELLOW-TROJANS AFTER THE TROJAN WAR, WAS CONSIDERED TO BE THE FOUNDER OF THE ROMAN RACE IN ITALY.

[TROJAN WAR: CA. 1194 B.C. – 1184 B.C.]

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**The settlement which became
Ancient Rome was founded along
the Tiber River in 753 B.C.**

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DICTIONARY* (2003)**

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SURVIVING LITERARY ACCOUNTS OF THE BEGINNINGS OF ROME ARE BASED ENTIRELY ON LEGEND, PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE ROMANS AT VARIOUS TIMES THOUGHT ABOUT THEIR OWN ORIGINS AND HOW THEY LIKED TO SEE THEMSELVES.

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THE DEVELOPED VERSION OF THE FOUNDING OF ROME CONTAINED TWO MAIN LEGENDS, THOSE OF AENEAS AND ROMULUS, WHICH WERE ARTIFICIALLY COMBINED AT AN UNKNOWN DATE (BUT CERTAINLY BEFORE 300 B.C.).

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Although quite unhistorical, the legend of Romulus as founder of the original settlement on the Palatine Hill is consistent with the archaeological facts.

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DICTIONARY* (2003)**

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**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE
NOW AVAILABLE REGARDING
ANCIENT ROME SHOWS THAT ONE
OR MORE VILLAGES WERE
ESTABLISHED ON THE HILLS OF
ROME (INCLUDING THE PALATINE)
FROM THE END OF THE BRONZE
AGE (CA. 1000 B.C.).**

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DICTIONARY* (2003)**

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THE EARLY-ROME COMMUNITIES WERE SIMILAR TO OTHER HILLTOP SETTLEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED THROUGHOUT *LATIUM VETUS*, WHOSE CEMETERIES PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF A DISTINCT FORM OF MATERIAL CULTURE KNOWN AS *CULTURA LAZIALE*, WITH AN EARLIEST PHASE CONSISTING OF ISOLATED VILLAGES WITH SEVERAL THATCHED HUTS.

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DURING THE 8TH AND 7TH CENTURIES IN ANCIENT CENTRAL ITALY, SMALL VILLAGES GREW IN SOPHISTICATED, WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL TRADE, SPECIALIZED CRAFT PRODUCTION, AND THE EMERGENCE OF A WEALTHY ARISTOCRACY.

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IN ANCIENT ROME, THE SETTLEMENT ON THE PALATINE HILL EXPANDED BY 700 B.C. TO INCLUDE THE FORUM VALLEY AND POSSIBLY THE QUIRINAL HILL, AND THE MAIN CEMETERY MOVED FROM THE FORUM TO THE ESQUILINE HILL.

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TOWARDS THE END OF THE 7TH CENTURY B.C., THE ROMAN FORUM WAS LAID OUT AS A PUBLIC MEETING PLACE, AND MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS MADE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE. AT THIS POINT, ROMA WAS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ORGANIZED CITY-STATE.

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AS BEFITS A FRONTIER TOWN ON AN IMPORTANT RIVER CROSSING, ANCIENT ROMA SEEMS TO HAVE HAD A MIXED POPULATION, INCLUDING SABINES, GREEKS, AND APPARENTLY, LARGE NUMBERS OF ETRUSCANS.

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ALTHOUGH HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY CONTACTS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, INCLUDING GREECE AND THE NEAR EAST, AS WELL AS ETRURIA AND CAMPANIA, ROME REMAINED FUNDAMENTALLY A LATIN CITY.

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**BASED ON AN EVER-INCREASING
BODY OF LATIN INSCRIPTIONS, IT IS
PROBABLE THAT ROMAN CULTURE
HAD BEEN LITERATE FROM THE
PERIOD PRIOR TO 600 B.C./B.C.E.**

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DICTIONARY* (2003)**

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According to the sources, ancient Rome was originally ruled by kings, which is likely enough, but there is no certainty that the traditional series of names of the Etruscan kings is accurate.

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Although not necessarily accurate, the “canonical seven” list of Roman kings consisted of Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Martius, Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Tarquinius Superbus.

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The conventional foundation date, fixed at 753 B.C. by Varro, is the result of artificial manipulation, and does not accord with any archaeological starting point.

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According to archaeological evidence, the earliest settlement in ancient Rome was much earlier than 753 B.C., and the formation of an urbanized city-state considerably later.

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Alternative historical traditions record the names of kings not included in the canonical list of seven, e.g. Titus Tatius and Mastarna.

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Roman conquest of the Alban Hills region and the lower Tiber River valley led to an expansion of Roman territory which must have occurred before the end of the 6th century B.C.

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The organization of the Roman calendar and the founding of the major priesthoods can be dated with some confidence to the 6th century B.C. or earlier.

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The last two kings of ancient Rome are presented as tyrants – illegal usurpers who adopted a flamboyant and populist style of rule similar to that of their contemporary Greek tyrants.

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The last two kings of ancient Rome pursued an ambitious foreign policy, patronized the arts, and embarked on extensive and grandiose building projects, during the early period of the 6th century B.C.

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Prior to the ousting of the Etruscan kings, Tarquinius Superbus was said to have created a miniature “empire” in central Italy’s *Latium*.

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The strength of the miniature “empire” of Tarquinius Superbus evidenced a state of affairs presupposed in the first Carthaginian treaty [v. Polybius]; this coincidence between the annalistic tradition and an apparently contemporary document tends to confirm the authenticity of both.

SOURCE: *OXFORD CLASSICAL DICTIONARY* (2003)