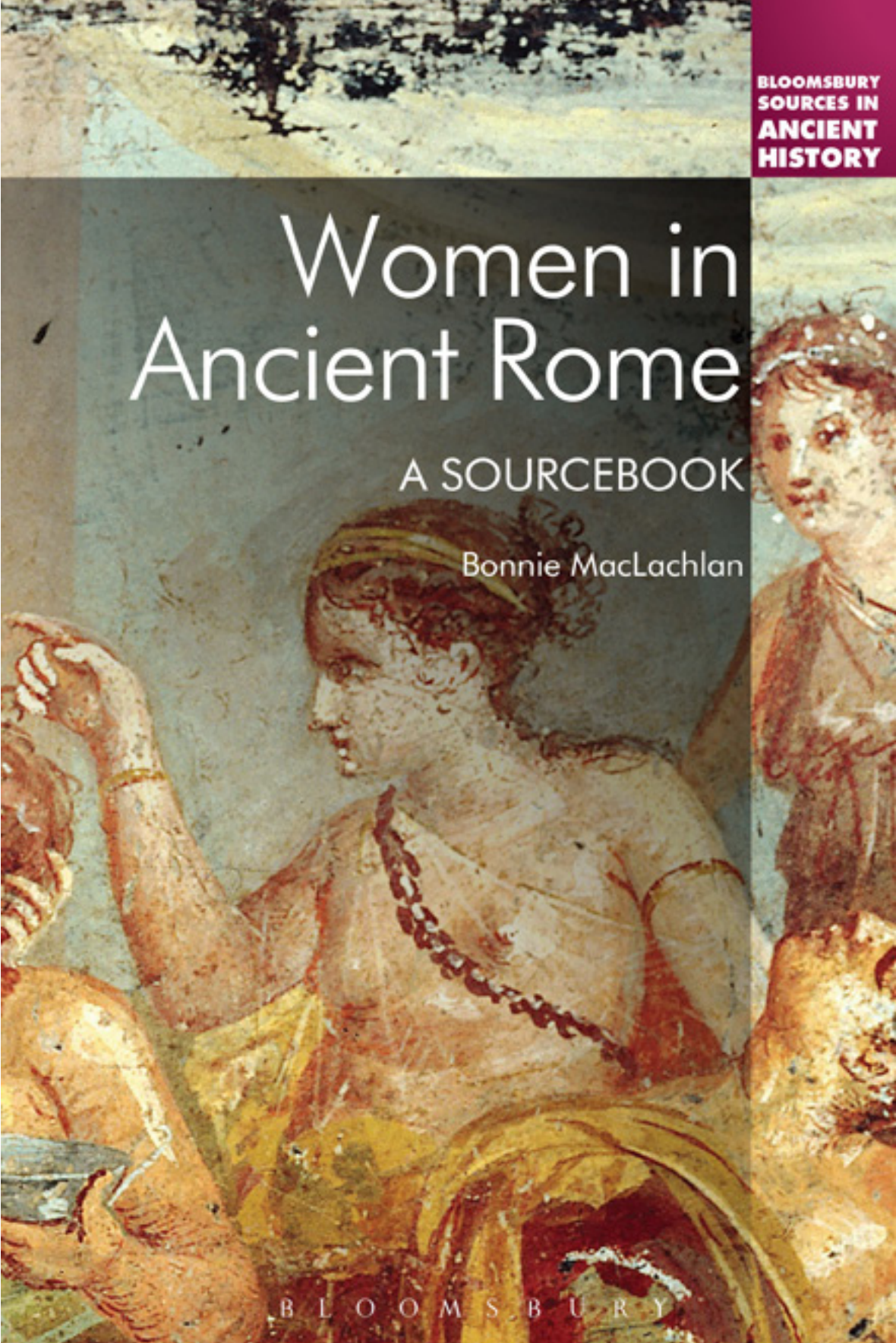


The background of the book cover is a reproduction of an ancient Roman fresco. It depicts a woman in profile, facing left, wearing a yellow and red garment with a dark beaded necklace. To her right, another woman is partially visible, wearing a red garment and a headband. The fresco is set against a dark, textured background.

**BLOOMSBURY
SOURCES IN
ANCIENT
HISTORY**

Women in Ancient Rome

A SOURCEBOOK

Bonnie MacLachlan

BLOOMSBURY

Women in Ancient Rome

BLOOMSBURY SOURCES IN ANCIENT HISTORY

Women in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook

Bonnie MacLachlan

Greek and Roman Sexualities: A Sourcebook

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Women in Ancient Rome

A Sourcebook

Bonnie MacLachlan

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Introduction

For many years now the field of Classics has moved on from the study of artifacts and texts in a hermetically sealed time capsule to consider the material in its broader context. The resources for Ancient Greece and Rome date from the second millennium BCE until the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the fifth century CE, and while our interpretations are still in large measure informed by their historical context, we are now free to engage in an examination that is both diachronic and synchronic, incorporating cross-cultural evidence and noting common features in human behaviour and expression across a span in time and space. Not infrequently one of the consequences of this is the fresh insight we gain about our own social interactions. Nowhere is this clearer than with the study of texts and artifacts that tell us something about Greek and Roman gendered behaviour.

This makes the teaching of *Women in Classical Antiquity* a lively enterprise, and this book is intended to play a part in the unveiling of features of modern as well as ancient gender interaction. I have translated a variety of Latin and Greek texts that address the situation of women in ancient Rome from its legendary beginnings in the eighth century BCE until the fourth century CE. This is a compilation of historical, legendary, philosophical and inscriptional texts, as well as others drawn from a variety of literary genres. They are presented for the most part in chronological sequence, with a brief running commentary situating them in their context. I anticipate that fuller contextualization and interpretive guidance will be supplied by instructors, as there remains the challenge of finding an authentic portrait of the life of women in a patriarchal culture where most of the texts are composed by men. I assume also that in this study a fuller array of texts will be consulted as needed, taking advantage of such resources as *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook* (1982/1992/2005), *Women in the Classical World* (1994), *Reading Roman Women* (2001), *Roman Women* (2007), and others supplied by the general bibliography at the end of the book. More specialized bibliographies are found at the end of each chapter. It is most certainly the case that these bibliographies will quickly be out of date, but it is equally clear that students will have immediate access to new titles as soon as they appear.

The first part contains largely legendary material, covering the two and a half centuries during which tradition held that Rome was governed by kings

(between the conventional dates of 753 BCE and 509 BCE). From the outset, several patterns are clear that can be traced throughout the history of Rome, such as the fact that women's capacity to reproduce was closely guarded and often exploited by men. With the emergence of the Republic at the end of the 6th century BCE, the historical material can be read with a greater degree of confidence, but as with historical accounts of any age, readers must be prepared to recognize the ideological assumptions that frame them. Part 2 covers the Early and Middle phases of the Republic, exposing the ways in which gender and class intersected when the patrician and plebian orders were in conflict. Where possible, I have tried to include evidence for the activities of lower class and slave women, despite the fact that the historical record is preoccupied with the elites. The third part covers the turbulent century of civil wars in Rome that ended with the victory of Octavian/Augustus over Mark Antony in 31 BCE; this therefore includes excerpts detailing the effect of war on women's lives. Part 4 contains material from the first six decades of the Empire launched by Augustus, with the effects on women (of all classes) of relative political stability and affluence for the privileged governing and elite groups. "The Later Empire" is the final part, presenting a broad selection of excerpts from various genres and contexts composed over roughly four centuries, ending with the effects of the clash between polytheistic religion and the monotheistic cult of Christianity that left female martyrs from both traditions.

This book would not have been possible without my being able to consider, and in many cases include, texts already selected by authors/editors of books in this field – most notably *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* and *Women in the Classical World*, mentioned above. In addition, there are certain individuals whose help has been crucial to the project: Dwayne Meisner, a doctoral student in my home department, who provided a careful reading of my translations and verified the numerical references; Elaine Fantham, my former teacher and dear friend, who offered many important suggestions about the selection of texts and the historical commentary; Paul Potter and Beate Gundert, who provided helpful comments on the passages quoting ancient medical writers; my colleagues Beth Greene and Alex Meyer who assisted with interpreting material from Vindolanda and Pompeii and Kelly Olson, who supplied important contributions for the bibliographies. Particular thanks go to Nicholas Horsfall, who was always prepared with professional suggestions for my textual queries and to Carol Agocs, for her assistance with proof-reading. My thanks also go to Charlotte Loveridge, Kim Storry and Dhara Patel of Bloomsbury Press, for competent handling of the manuscript. Of course I hold none of these individuals responsible for errors that may be discovered.

The translations are all my own. Material in parentheses within the translations is explanatory; that in square brackets supplements the text. With

the numerical references, which can vary considerably because of a range of established texts, I decided to follow those used by the Perseus Digital Library (frequently identical with the bilingual Loeb editions). This I did after a great deal of thought, because I realized that it would facilitate the work of students who wished to read larger selections of text through internet consultation.

Bonnie MacLachlan
University of Western Ontario
January 2013

Abbreviations for works cited

<i>Bernand, A. and E.</i>	Bernand A. and E. 1960 (eds) <i>Les Inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon</i> . Cairo
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . 1863–1959. Berlin
<i>CMG</i>	<i>Corpus Medicorum Graecorum</i> . 1927–. Berlin
<i>De Caesaribus</i>	<i>Sexti Aurelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus</i> . 1966 (ed.) F. Pichlmayr. Leipzig
<i>FIRA</i>	<i>Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani</i> . 1940 (eds) S. Riccobono et al. Florence
<i>Gaius</i>	<i>Gai Institutiones</i> or <i>Institutes of Roman Law</i> . 1904 (ed.) E. Poste. 1925 (revised and enlarged by) E. A. Whittuck. Oxford
<i>ILLRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae</i> . 1963. vols 1 and 2 (ed.) A. Degrassi. Florence
<i>ILS²</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> . 1962. vol. 2, part 2 (ed.) H. Dessau. Berlin
<i>Kühn</i>	Kühn, C. G. 1964 (ed.) <i>Claudii Galeni, Opera Omnia</i> . Hildesheim
<i>Marshall</i>	Marshall, P. K. 1977 (ed.) <i>Cornelii Nepotis. Vitae cum Fragmentis</i> . Leipzig
<i>ORF</i>	<i>Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta</i> . 1955 (ed.) H. Malcovati. Turin
<i>Pap. Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> 1898–. London
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca posterior</i> . 1857– (ed.) J. P. Migne. Paris
<i>RTLA</i>	<i>Receuil de Textes Latins Archaiques</i> 1957 (ed.) A. Ernout. Paris
<i>Skutsch</i>	Skutsch, O. 1985 (ed.) <i>The Annals of Q. Ennius</i> . Oxford
<i>Tab. Vindol.</i>	<i>Tabulae Vindolandeses</i> 2003 (eds) A. K. Bowman, J. D. Thomas and J. Pearce. London

PART 1

ROME'S BEGINNINGS

Women and the legendary past

CREUSA

The written record of Rome's earliest historical period is a legendary one. While we cannot be sure of the degree to which these tales were based in historical reality we can be confident that in their retelling they shaped, reflected and reinforced the attitudes of the people telling and hearing them. The cultural patterns that were sustained in this way included those governing the interactions between women and men.

This story of the foundation of Rome reflected an attempt to link the Roman world to Greece's heroic past. Vergil's great Latin epic *The Aeneid*, disseminated at the end of the last century BCE and in the early decades of the first century CE, forged a mythical link between the Roman Empire and the Trojan War. Aeneas, a Trojan prince who escaped the destruction of his city, turned his back on this chapter of his life, driven by destiny to establish a new kingdom on the Italian peninsula. Vergil describes Aeneas' development as a Romanized hero in two emotional vignettes in which he detaches himself from women with whom he has had an intimate relationship but who cannot be part of his Roman destiny.

The first is his Trojan wife Creusa. With the city conquered and in flames Aeneas cries out for her, running through the streets. Startled suddenly, he sees her ghost coming out of the shadows. She explains to him that the gods have decreed that his Roman destiny does not include her.

"What good is there in giving yourself over to such insane grief,
my dear husband? These things have not come to pass without the will of the gods.
Nor is it permitted for you to take your companion Creusa away from here;
not even the ruler of Olympus on high permits it.
There will be a long period of exile for you, and you must plow the vast expanse
of sea
before you come to the Hesperian (Western) land, where the Lydian Tiber
flows through the fertile fields of men with a gentle swerve.
There good fortune and a kingdom and a royal wife
have been prepared for you. Banish your tears for your beloved Creusa."
(2.777–84)

Creusa assured him that she would not be led away into slavery by the Greeks, for the gods had willed it that she not leave Trojan soil. After asking him to take care of their young son, she disappeared into the air. Three times Aeneas tried to clasp her, and three times her image disappeared, as Vergil says, like a fleeting dream. Aeneas departed with their son Ascanius, his aged father and a band of Trojan followers.

DIDO

En route to Italy, Aeneas was blown off-course by a storm and stopped at Carthage, a city on the north coast of Africa that had been founded by the Queen Dido of Sidon, who gave him unexpected and exceptional hospitality. The hero's mother, the love-goddess Venus, had arranged a passionate encounter between the two, and the relationship continued for a year until Jupiter sent a divine emissary with the directive that Aeneas depart.

Dido, suspecting that Aeneas had departure in mind, was less compliant than Creusa when he tried to explain why he must leave. After raving in mad distraction she confronted the hero.

"Did you actually hope to keep it a secret, you faithless one – that you could pull off something so great, so terribly impious, quietly slipping away from my land?

Did not our love hold you back, or the pledge that you once gave, or Dido, who will die a cruel death?

Why indeed are you launching your fleet under a wintry star and rushing to travel over the deep in the midst of northerly winds, cruel one? What would happen if you were not seeking foreign soil and an unfamiliar home, but ancient Troy still stood?

Would Troy be the destination of your ships over the billowy sea?

Is it from me that you are fleeing? Oh, by these tears and your pledge, when in my distress I have left myself nothing else at all, by our marriage, by our wedding rites initiated,

if I deserved anything good from you or if there was anything endearing you got from me, take pity on my household in tatters, and I beg you – if there is any place for prayers to this point – cast off this intention of yours!"

(4.306–19)

Dido then appealed to Aeneas on the grounds that she needed his protection from local chiefs who wished to marry her. She considered theirs a marriage relationship, and lamented the fact that they had not at least produced a son (and male heir) whose face would keep alive his memory.

"If only before your flight there had been a child from you taken up into my arms,
a tiny Aeneas to play in my hall,
such as to bring you back to me by his looks.
In that case I would not seem to be so entirely forsaken and deserted."
(4.327–30)

Aeneas kept his mind focused on the dictates of the gods, but answered her appeal.

"Finally he answered her briefly. 'I will never deny, Queen,
that you are deservedly right about the many things you listed as you spoke to me.
It will not displease me to recall Elissa (another name for Dido)
as long as my memory holds, as long as breath governs these limbs.
I will now speak briefly about the issue. I did not hope to cover up this flight from
you in secret –
don't imagine this – nor did I ever carry wedding torches
nor did I come to the point of taking this marriage vow.
If the fates had permitted me to live out my life under my own direction,
and to arrange my concerns in accordance with my own will,
I would be looking after the city of Troy first, and the cherished remains of my kin –
if the lofty towers of King Priam had remained
and if I could have rebuilt Pergamon for her defeated people by my own hands.'"
(4.333–44)

Aeneas assured Dido that it was not of his own free will that he was now drawn to the shores of Italy, but because of the directives of the gods and the future that lay in store for his son. Like Dido, he was subject to Fate, and he asked her to calm down.

"Now even the interpreter of the gods, sent by Jupiter himself –
I swear this by your head and mine – has brought down his message through the swift air.
I saw the god himself entering the walls openly in broad daylight,
and I drank in his voice with my ears.
Leave off inflaming me and you both with your complaints;
it is not of my own free will that I go in search of Italy."
(4.356–61)

But Dido answered with renewed fury, accusing him of being a savage brute and of ingratitude for the shelter she had provided the Trojans.

"Traitor, no goddess was your parent; no Dardanus was the forefather of your race,
but the brutal Caucasus gave birth to you on its harsh peaks,

and Hyrcanian tigresses gave you suck at their teats.

Why should I feign it, or for what more critical moment am I keeping myself?

Did he feel sorrow in the face of my weeping? Did he soften his look?

Was he overcome and did he shed a tear? Did he feel pity for the one who loves him?

What could I anticipate from this? At this very moment neither great Juno nor the father,

the son of Saturn, looks upon this with eyes of equanimity.

Nowhere is trust safe. A castaway on the shore, in dire need,

I took him in, and – fool that I was – I gave him a place with a share in the kingdom.

His lost fleet and his companions I brought back from death's door.

Oh, how I am set awirl by fires of rage!"

(4.365–76)

Dido dismissed him with threats that when she died her ghost would torment him. Aeneas later encountered her ghost when he descended to the Underworld (while alive) to consult with his father, who had died before they could reach Italy. Dido had committed suicide when Aeneas left Carthage, and was wandering in the Fields of Mourning with others who had suffered from the cruel pangs of love.

"Among them through the deep forest wandered Phoenician Dido,

newly dead from her fatal wound. The Trojan hero,

as soon as he saw her, stood still and recognized her shadowy form

in the dark, just as one sees, or thinks he has seen,

the new moon appearing through the clouds at the beginning of the month.

He shed tears and spoke to her with tender love,

'Unhappy Dido, the news that came to me then was true,

that the light of your life was extinguished and you pursued your own destruction with the blade.

Oh! was I the cause of your death? I swear by the stars,

by the gods above and by whatever pledge of truth there can be deep beneath the earth

that it was against my will, Queen, that I departed from your shore.

But the commands of the gods, which now compel me to go through this shadowy realm,

through places rough with neglect and through the depths of night –

they compelled me to carry out their orders. I could not believe

that you were carrying such great pain because of my departure.

Halt your steps and don't pull yourself away from my sight.

From whom are you fleeing? This is the last word that I can address to you with fate's consent.'

With these words Aeneas tried to soften the soul that was burning
 and looking fiercely at him, and he shed tears.
 But she was turning away, with her eyes fixed on the ground,
 nor was her look changed when he had begun his speech, any more
 than if she were hard flint or stood there as a rocky marble cliff on Paros.
 At length she detached herself and fled, still hostile,
 into the shadowy grove."
 (6.450–73)

When Aeneas finally landed on the Italian shore it was not long before war erupted with the local inhabitants. Eventually the Trojans were victorious, and a new alliance was forged with the local king Latinus, cemented by the marriage of Aeneas with Latinus' daughter Lavinia. In Vergil's version his Trojan son Ascanius was renamed "Iulus" (= "Julus"), and he became the founder of the Julian clan of Romans to which the poet's patron Augustus belonged.

ILIA

Ennius, a poet who preceded Vergil by about 200 years and also composed an epic poem about the early history of Rome, referred to a daughter of Aeneas named Ilia. In a fragment of his poem preserved by Cicero, Ennius described Ilia's being awakened by a disturbing dream in which an unknown man abducted her. Ilia cried aloud, which summoned her aged nurse, and the young woman recounted the dream to her sister (or half-sister). In the legendary history of Rome, the stranger is the god Mars, and his rape of Ilia (more frequently called Rhea Silvia) would result in the births of the twins Romulus and Remus.

"The old woman with feeble limbs brought the light in a hurry.
 Then tearfully [Ilia] recounted the following, frightened out of her sleep:
 'Child of Eurydice, whom our father loved,
 now strength and life have abandoned my whole body.
 For a handsome man seemed to carry me off through a pleasant willow grove
 by the banks of the river – places unfamiliar to me.
 And so, after this, true sister of mine, I seemed to wander all alone,
 to search after you with halting steps and ask for you,
 but could not reach you with my heart.
 No pathway steadied my feet.
 Then my father seemed to call to me with his voice,
 using these words: "Oh, child, first you must endure hardship,
 but afterwards your fortune will rise again, out of the river."

Once he said this, Sister, our father suddenly left.
 He didn't present himself to my sight, although wishing it in his heart,
 even though again and again I held up my hands to the azure vault of the sky
 weeping, calling to him with the voice of persuasion.
 But then sleep abandoned me, leaving my heart in turmoil.'"
 (Ennius, *Annals* 1.29 Skutsch = Cicero, *On Divination* 1.40–1)

RHEA SILVIA

In the better known version of Rome's early history a line of kings succeeded Ascanius/Iulus, who moved the settlement to the Alban hills. The best known of these early kings is Romulus. The story with its legendary frame is picked up by the Roman prose historian Livy, a contemporary of Vergil's who compiled a history of Rome from its earliest foundation until the first century CE. The historian describes the foundation of the city of Rome as beginning with the rape of Rhea Silvia, daughter of King Numitor. The king's brother had taken the throne by force, killing Numitor's sons and making his daughter Rhea Silvia a Vestal Virgin, committing her to celibacy (see below) in order to secure his position. Raped by the war god Mars, however, Rhea Silvia gave birth to twin boys, Romulus and Remus.

"The Vestal was raped, and when she had given birth to twins – whether she believed it or felt she was made more respectable by a claim that a god was the cause of her sin – she declared that Mars was the father of her offspring in question. But neither gods or men freed her or her babies from the king's cruelty. The priestess was bound and placed in custody; he ordered the boys to be thrown in a running river." (1.4.1–3)

A familiar tale in the narrative of early Rome is that of the rescue of Romulus and Remus, and the suckling of the infants by a she-wolf. Romulus eventually became king, and established the city that took his name on a place situated on the River Tiber surrounded by hills. The traditional date for the foundation of Rome is 753 BCE.

Women and the early kings

THE SABINE WOMEN I

Romulus extended the population of his new city by inviting refugees from the surrounding population to settle in Rome. Soon, however, he realized that he was facing a shortage of women. Confronting difficulties when trying to arrange intermarriage with neighbouring communities, he came up with a stratagem. He sent messengers throughout the region announcing a lavish celebration of the festival Consuelia, in honour of Neptune as patron of horses. Out of curiosity to see the new town, Livy tells us, crowds of men, women and children convened in Rome, including a large number of Sabines who were neighbours in Latium. The guests were offered generous hospitality while they admired the extensive fortifications and buildings. But when the formal part of the festival began, a signal was given and all the strong Roman men dashed about seizing the young Sabine women.

“When the show had turned to disarray because of the panic then the distraught parents of the young girls escaped, with accusations against the compact of hospitality that had been violated and calling upon the god to whose festival they had come, having been deceived in their religious duty and trust. The outrage of the seized women was not less than this, nor was their hope for their future any greater.

But Romulus himself went about and pointed out that this had been done because of the arrogance of their parents, who had refused intermarriage with their neighbours. Nonetheless, the girls were now married women sharing all the fortunes of Rome, all the privileges of the community. There would be children, too, than which nothing is dearer to human nature. Let them only relent in their wrath and to those whom chance had given their bodies let them give their hearts. Often (he said) out of a wrong there arises later a feeling of affection, and to that degree they would be treated by their husbands more kindly because each one would strive on his own behalf so that when his part of the obligation was discharged he would also compensate them for what they were missing from their parents and their homes. Added to this were the sweet words spoken by the husbands, that the action was done from a desire to make amends and out of love – words that are most effective as appeals to touch a woman’s heart.” (1.9.13–16)

The loyalty of the Sabine wives was divided as time passed, between their Roman husbands and families and the Sabine families they had lost. The latter did not weaken in their remorse and their resolve to take revenge for the abduction of their young women.

“The minds of the abducted women were completely softened. But the parents of the seized girls then stirred up the cities by wearing mourning vestments and pouring out their tears and lamentations. Not only was their indignation confined to their hometowns but they also assembled from all parts at the home of Titus Tatius, king of the Sabines. Delegations assembled there because Tatius was the greatest name in that part of the country.” (1.10.1)

Tatius and the Sabines were slower to act than other neighbouring people who went ahead and invaded Roman territory. Romulus and the Romans easily defeated these two incursions. While King Romulus vaunted in his success, his wife Hersilia appealed to him to offer a conciliatory gesture to the Sabines.

“While Romulus was exulting in his double victory, Hersilia his wife, harassed by the appeals of the abducted women, pleaded with him to pardon their relatives and invite them into the state. In this way the situation could be consolidated with a friendly alliance. Her appeal succeeded with ease.” (1.11.2–3)
(Livy, *History of Rome*)

TARPEIA

A certain amount of amicable trust was achieved in the region, with Roman settlers moving into neighbouring territory and a number of the relatives of the captured women moving to Rome. A significant body of the Sabines remained hostile, however, and under King Tatius they mounted a carefully planned attack on the city of Romulus. A Roman girl named Tarpeia, the daughter of the commander of the Roman garrison, was tricked by the Sabine king into opening the gates to the invaders.

“The last battle was instigated by the Sabines, and that was the greatest by far, for nothing was undertaken out of anger or greed, nor did they give notice of war before they launched it. Furthermore, treachery was added to their design. Spurius Tarpeius was in charge of the Roman citadel. Tatius bribed the virgin daughter of this man with gold, so that she would admit the armed men into the citadel. It happened at the time that she had gone outside the fortifications to seek water for sacrifices. Once they were inside they covered her with their weapons and killed

her, either so that the citadel could seem to have been taken by force or so that, by making a public case of it there would never be any trust placed in a traitor. There is also the tale that the Sabines were widely known to wear heavy gold bracelets on their left arms and conspicuous jewelled rings, and that the girl had demanded what they held in their left hands. The outcome was that their shields were piled on her, standing in for gifts of gold. There are those who say that she, when the agreement was arranged to hand over what was in their left hands, demanded their shields, and when she was seen to be acting with treachery she herself was dispatched by means of the price she had set." (1.11.5–11)

Today one can see the "Tarpeian Rock", a cliff face of the Capitoline Hill from which traitors and criminals were thrown for many centuries.

THE SABINE WOMEN II

With the Sabines in possession of the fortified Capitol, a fierce battle was waged below in the area of what became the Roman Forum. Eventually the issue was decided by the very women who had been the reason for the fighting.

"At this moment the Sabine women, from whose unjust treatment the battle had begun, with loosened hair and torn vestments, their womanly fear overcome by the evils at hand, dared to thrust themselves into the midst of the flying weapons. Making it through the crossfire they parted the hostile ranks, dissolving the men's fury, pleading on the one hand with their fathers, on the other with their husbands, not to spatter themselves with the accursed blood of their sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, lest they stain with parricide their offspring, who were grandsons of men on one side, free-born sons of men on the other side. 'If there is a grievance over the relationship between you, if our intermarriage is provoking you, turn your anger against us. We are the cause of the war; we are the cause of the wounds and slaughter of our husbands and fathers. We would rather perish than live as widows or orphans, without either of you.'

Their appeal moved both the throng of men and their leaders. Suddenly there was silence and suddenly nothing stirred. Then the leaders came forward to conclude a treaty. And they produced not only peace but one state out of two. They shared the kingdom, conveying the entire rule to Rome." (1.13.1–5)
(Livy, *History of Rome*)

EGERIA

The city prospered under Romulus. The next king, Numa Pompilius, was a Sabine. According to Livy, the military expansion that had established the city of Rome under his predecessor was replaced by Numa's devotion to setting up a legal and religious framework that would ensure its stability. He put in place a lunar calendar and established priesthoods, which included the Vestal Virgins (pp. 39–40 below). Numa drew his inspiration from a divine figure, according to Livy, the wood-nymph Egeria.

“There was a grove in the midst of which was a spring that came out of a dark grotto and watered it all year long. Because Numa often took himself there on his own without witnesses, for ‘an encounter’ with the goddess, as it were, he declared this grove sacred to the Camenae (Nymphs of sacred springs who were identified with Muses), the place where they would hold conversations with his wife Egeria.” (1.21.3–4)

(Livy, *History of Rome*)

Later ancient sources are more skeptical about the role played by Egeria.

“And to be sure it is generally agreed that wondrous good fortune guided the long-lasting kingship of Numa. But that a certain Egeria, one of the wood-nymphs and a wise divinity, a sexual partner of the man, guided and shaped the constitution, is something of a fable.”

(Plutarch, *Moralia* 321B [first/second century CE])

Framed as a conversation between a certain Paris and Nepotianus, the following comments of Valerius Maximus (first century CE) are in the same vein, taken from his collection of anecdotes compiled for use in rhetorical schools. The spelling of the names varies slightly from other accounts.

(Paris) “Numa Pompilius, so that he might bind the Roman populace with rituals, wanted it to seem that there were nightly meetings with the goddess Egeria, and that with her counsel he instituted rituals that would be most acceptable to the immortal gods.”

(Nepotianus) “Numa Pompilius, when he noticed that the Romans had become fierce through continual warfare, taught them how to worship the gods. And to the same end, so that they might more easily be tamed, he concocted a story that he was accustomed to having the nymph Egeria as his advisor, so that he would have greater authority among his fierce subjects.”

(Valerius Maximus, *Nine Books of Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.2)

LAWS OF THE KINGS

Various ancient sources supply us with laws that were attributed to Romulus and Numa. Documentary accounts such as that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century BCE) were composed as many as 900 years after the traditional dating of these kings, and may well represent a popular but inaccurate record of restrictive measures the kings put in place. From Dionysius we get the following report of regulations connected with marriage attributed to Romulus. The first presents some limitations placed upon women of a certain type of marriage.

“Romulus, by not giving to the husband the right to bring a charge against his wife for adultery or for leaving the house without justification, nor to the wife to bring a suit against her husband for wrong-doing or for leaving her without justification or for not making legal arrangements for the return or recovery of her dowry by the enactment of a single law – by not regulating any other of the affairs for these people – with a single law which held sway over all such cases, as the effects themselves have shown, he brought women to exercise moderation and self-control. This was the law: a woman who was married in a ‘sacred marriage’ joined with her husband and there was a common sharing of possessions and sacred rites.” (2.25.1–2)

The sacred marriage is commonly understood to refer to marriage with *confarreatio*, in a ritual marked by the sharing of bread before the chief priests and ten witnesses.

Joining with her husband in a “sacred marriage” placed the bride *in manu*, “in the hand” of her husband, giving him complete control over her. If she behaved well, however, according to Dionysius she would share the household management in equal measure with him and stood to inherit property. If she misbehaved, however, the penalty was severe.

“This law compelled the married women, inasmuch as they had no other place to turn, to live their life in accordance with the manner of the man they had married, and the men to rule over their wives as necessary and inalienable property. A wife who was prudent and obedient to her husband in all matters was mistress of the household in the same way her husband was its master. If her husband died she became heir to the property, as a daughter would become heir of her father’s estate. If he had no children and were to die without a will she was mistress of all that he had left, but if he had offspring she had a share equal to that of the children. If she had committed some wrongdoing she was subject to the injured party as judge and he was in charge of the severity of her punishment. But in the following cases