

Chapter 14

The city of Rome

14.1 Romulus and Remus

- Numitor was king of Alba Longa
- Numitor's brother, Amulius, seized the throne, killed Numitor's sons and forced his only daughter, Rhea Silvia, to become a Vestal Virgin
- The god Mars fell in love with Rhea Silvia and twin boys, Romulus and Remus, were born
- Amulius had the boys thrown in the River Tiber but they survived and were found by a she-wolf
- A shepherd called Faustulus brought the twins up as his own and when they were older they drove Amulius off the throne and restored their father
- They then decided to build their own city. To decide who should be king, Romulus went to the top of the Palatine Hill and Remus went to the top of the Aventine Hill. Remus saw six eagles, but Romulus saw 12
- While Romulus was building his new city, Remus jumped over the partly built walls and Romulus killed him
- The new city was called Rome, after Romulus, and was believed to have been founded in 753 BC

14.2 Horatius

- In 506 BC Tarquin the Proud, king of Rome, was driven out of the city and went for help to Lars Porsena, king of the nearby Etruscan town of Clusium
- Lars Porsena marched on Rome at the head of an army
- The Etruscans were held up at the bridge that crossed the River Tiber into the city, near the Janiculum Hill
- Here a soldier called Horatius Cocles, with two companions, stood on the bridge and prevented the Etruscans from crossing while the Romans behind him chopped down the bridge
- The two companions, Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius, escaped back over the bridge before it fell into the river, and Horatius himself had to swim back

14.3 Mucius Scaevola

- While Lars Porsena was camped on the far side of the River Tiber from Rome, the citizens inside the city began to run short of food
- Gaius Mucius decided to kill Lars Porsena, and slipped into the Etruscan camp
- By mistake he killed the king's paymaster instead of the king
- When he was brought before the king, Gaius Mucius showed he was not afraid by thrusting his hand into the fire
- Lars Porsena was so impressed that he released Gaius Mucius, who was later known as Scaevola ('left-handed')

14.4 Cloelia

- Eventually Lars Porsena and the Romans made peace, and hostages were given to Lars Porsena
- One of these was a girl called Cloelia who with a group of fellow hostages decided to escape by swimming across the River Tiber
- Lars Porsena was furious and threatened to attack Rome if the hostages were not returned
- Cloelia returned of her own free will, and Lars Porsena was so impressed with her bravery that he allowed her to return home, taking some more of the hostages with her

14.5 Coriolanus

- Gnaeus Marcius was a Roman soldier who helped to capture the Volscian city of Corioli, and was given the name Coriolanus as a result
- Some years later, Coriolanus was expelled from Rome and he went to live with the Volsci
- Coriolanus was so angry with the Romans that he persuaded the Volsci to attack Rome
- Coriolanus had great success in battle against the Romans, and it looked as if Rome itself would soon fall to his troops
- At that stage his mother, Veturia, came to Coriolanus' camp with his wife Volumnia and two small sons, and pleaded with him not to attack the city of his fathers
- Coriolanus was shamed into withdrawing his troops, and was driven into exile by the Volsci

14.6 Manlius Torquatus

- In 361 BC Rome was being attacked by the Gauls
- During a lull in the fighting, a huge Gaul proposed that the war should be settled by a single combat between him and one of the Romans
- A brave Roman called Titus Manlius volunteered and killed the huge Gaul, taking the gold torque from around his neck, and being called Torquatus as a result
- Twenty years later, the Romans were fighting the Latins, and Manlius Torquatus' son was in the army with his father
- Manlius Torquatus was consul and in charge of the Roman army; he ordered his troops not to attack the Latins
- His son, Manlius, was provoked by the Latins and challenged one of them to single combat
- Young Manlius won the combat, but because he had disobeyed not only the consul but also his own father, Manlius Torquatus ordered that he should be killed

14.7 The theatre

- Early Roman theatres were made of wood but soon came to be built of stone
- The stage was semicircular, with a *scaena* at the back representing a two- or three-storey building
- Theatres were open air, but awnings (*velaria*) could be drawn over to keep off the sun
- The best seats were placed in the *orchestra*, nearest the stage, and were reserved for senators; entrance was free
- Actors wore masks to show the type of character they were playing; brown masks for males, white masks for females
- Old men had white hair and beards, slaves had red wigs
- Romans enjoyed comedies by Terence and Plautus

14.8 The amphitheatre

- Gladiator fights and wild beast hunts were held in the amphitheatre
- The most impressive amphitheatre was the Colosseum in Rome, holding 50,000 people
- Before gladiators fought, they saluted the emperor with the words *ave Caesar, morituri te salutant* ('Hail Caesar, those about to die salute you')

