

# EPITOME OF ROMAN HISTORY.

BY LUCIUS ANNEÛS FLORUS.

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Roman people, during seven hundred years, from the time of king Romulus to that of Cæsar Augustus, performed such mighty acts both in peace and war, that if any one compares the greatness of their empire with its years, he will think it out of proportion to its age<sup>1</sup>. So far throughout the world have they extended their arms, that those who read their exploits, learn the fate, not of one people only, but of all mankind. So numerous are the toils and dangers in which they have been exercised, that ability<sup>2</sup> and fortune seem to have concurred in establishing their sway.

As it is of the highest importance, therefore, to learn this history<sup>3</sup> as well as others, but as the vastness of the subject is a hindrance to the knowledge of it, and the variety of topics distracts the faculty of attention<sup>4</sup>, I shall follow the example of those who describe the face of the earth<sup>5</sup>, and shall comprise the whole representation of the matter, as it were, in a small tablet, adding something, as I hope, to the admiration with which this eminent people are regarded, by showing their whole grandeur together and at one view. If

<sup>1</sup> Out of proportion to its age] *Ætatem ultra*. "He will think that so much could not have been done in so short a space of time." *Freinshemius*.

<sup>2</sup> Ability] *Virtus*. In the same sense as in Sallust, *Cat.*, c. 1, and elsewhere. see the Notes. So Florus, at the commencement of c. 3, says of Tullus Hostilius, *Cui in honorem virtutis regnum ultro datum*.

<sup>3</sup> This history] *Hoc*. I follow Duker's text, in which the passage stands thus: *Quare quum præcipuè hoc quoque, sicut cætera, operæ pretium sit cognoscere, tamen quia, &c.* But it is probably corrupt. In some copies the words *sicut cætera* are wanting, and in some the word *sigillatim* is found after *cognoscere*. Grævius conjectures that Florus wrote *Quare cum præcipua quæque opera pretium sit cognoscere sigillatim, tamen quia, &c.*

<sup>4</sup> Distracts the faculty of attention] *Acie[m] intentionis abrumpit*. "So w<sup>1</sup> <sup>5</sup> *abrumperè sermonem*." Minellius.

<sup>5</sup> Face of the earth] *Terrarum situs*. Situations of places on the earth.

any one, then, contemplates the Roman people as he would contemplate a man, and considers its whole age, how it had its origin, how it grew up, how it arrived at a certain vigour of manhood, and how it has since, as it were, grown old, he will observe four degrees and stages of its existence. Its first period was under its kings, lasting nearly two hundred and fifty years, during which it struggled round its mother against its neighbours; this was its infancy. Its next period extended from the consulship of Brutus and Collatinus to that of Appius Claudius and Quintus Fulvius, a space of two hundred and fifty years, during which it subdued Italy; this was a time of action for men and arms, and we may therefore call it its youth. The next period was one of two hundred years, to the time of Cæsar Augustus, in which it subdued the whole world; this may accordingly be called the manhood, and robust maturity, of the empire. From the reign of Cæsar Augustus to our own age is a period of little less than two hundred years, in which, from the inactivity of the Cæsars, it has grown old and lost its strength, except that it now raises its arms under the emperor Trajan, and, contrary to the expectation of all, the old age of the empire, as if youth were restored to it, renews its vigour.

## BOOK I.

## CHAP. I. OF ROMULUS, THE FIRST KING OF THE ROMANS.

The founder of the city and empire was Romulus, the son of Mars and Rhea Sylvia. The priestess, when pregnant, confessed this fact of herself, nor did report, soon afterwards, testify a doubt of it, as, being thrown, with his brother Remus, into the river by order of Amulius, he could not be destroyed; for not only did the Tiber repress its stream, but a she-wolf, leaving her young, and following the children's cries, offered her teats to the infants, and acted towards them the part of a mother. Being found, in these circumstances, under a tree, the king's shepherd carried them into a cottage, and brought them up.

The metropolis of Latium, at that time, was Alba, built by Iulus; for he had disdained Lavinium, the city of his father

Æneas. Amulius, the fourteenth descendant from them<sup>1</sup>, was now reigning there, having dethroned his brother Numinor, of whose daughter Romulus was the son. Romulus, in the first ardour of youth, drove Amulius from the citadel, and restored his grandfather. Being fond, however, of the river, and of the mountains where he had been brought up, he thought of founding among them the walls of a new city. But as he and his brother were twins, it was resolved to consult the gods which of the two should commence the work, and enjoy the sovereignty. Romulus, accordingly, took his station on Mount Aventine, and Remus on Mount Palatine. Romulus first saw six vultures; Remus was behind him in time, but saw twelve. Being thus superior in point of augury, Romulus proceeded to build the city, with full expectation that it would prove a warlike one, for so the birds, accustomed to blood and prey, seemed to promise.

For the defence of the new city a rampart appeared sufficient. While Remus was deriding its diminitiveness, and showing his contempt for it by leaping over it, he was, whether by his brother's order is uncertain, put to death. He was certainly the first victim, and consecrated the fortification of the new city with his blood.

But Romulus had formed the idea of a city, rather than a real city; for inhabitants were wanting. In the neighbourhood there was a grove, which he made a place of refuge<sup>2</sup>; and immediately an extraordinary number of men, some Latin and Tuscan shepherds, others from beyond the seas, Phrygians who had come into the country under Æneas, and Arcadians under Evander, took up their residence in it. Thus of various elements, as it were, he formed one body, and was himself the founder of the Roman people. But a people consisting only of men could last but one age; wives were therefore sought from the neighbouring nations, and, as they were not obtained, were seized by force. For a pretence being made of celebrating some equestrian games, the young women who came to see them, became a prey; and this immediately gave rise to wars. The Veientes were routed and put to flight. The city of the Cæninenses was taken and demolished; and Romulus also, with his own hands,

Ch. I. From them] *Ab his*. That is, from Æneas and Amulius. It should properly be *ab hoc*, from Amulius only.

<sup>2</sup> A place of refuge] *Asylum*.

offered the *spolia opima*, taken from their king, to Jupiter Feretrius. To the Sabines, the gates of Rome were given up by a young woman, though not treacherously<sup>1</sup>; she had asked, as a reward, what they wore on their left arms, but whether she meant their shields or their bracelets, is doubtful. They, to keep their word, and be revenged on her, buried her under their bucklers. The enemy having thus gained admission within the walls, there ensued, in the very forum, so desperate an engagement, that Romulus intreated Jupiter to stop the shameful flight of his men; and hence a temple was afterwards erected, and Jupiter surnamed Stator. At last the women who had been carried off, rushed, with their hair dishevelled, between the contending parties, and separated them. Thus peace was made, and a league established, with Tatius<sup>2</sup>; and a wonderful event followed, namely, that the enemy, leaving their habitations, removed into the new city, and shared their hereditary property with their sons-in-law, as a portion for their daughters.

The strength of the city being soon increased, this most wise monarch made the following arrangement in the state; that the young men, divided into tribes, should be ready, with horses and arms, for any sudden demands of war; and that the administration of affairs should be in the hands of the older men, who, from their authority, were called Fathers, and from their age, the Senate<sup>3</sup>. When he had thus regulated matters, and was holding an assembly of the people at the lake of Caprea, near the city, he was suddenly snatched out of their sight. Some think that he was cut to pieces by the senate, on account of his excessive severity; but a tempest which then arose, and an eclipse of the sun, were apparent proofs of his deification. This opinion Julius Proculus soon after confirmed, asserting that he had seen Romulus in a more majestic shape than he had had when alive; that he also commanded them to acknowledge him as a deity, as it pleased the gods that he should be called Quirinus in heaven; and that thus Rome should have the sovereignty of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Not treacherously] *Nec dolo*. Florus means that she intended no treachery to her countrymen, but wished to rob or disarm the enemy by depriving them of their bracelets or shields.

<sup>2</sup> Tatius] King of the Sabines. Comp. c. 15.

<sup>3</sup> The Senate] *Senatus*. From *senes*. old men.

## CHAP. II. OF NUMA POMPILIUS.

The successor of Romulus was Numa Pompilius, whom, when he was living at Cures, a town of the Sabines, the Romans of their own accord solicited, on account of his celebrated piety, to become their king. It was he who taught them sacred rites and ceremonies, and the whole worship of the immortal gods, and who instituted the pontiffs, augurs, Salii, and other sacerdotal offices among the Roman people. He also divided the year into twelve months, and the days into those for legal business and for vacation. He appointed the sacred shields and the image of Pallas, as certain secret pledges of empire; and ordered the temple of double-faced Janus to be the symbol of peace and war. He assigned the fire of Vesta to the care of virgins, that its flame might constantly burn, in imitation of the stars of heaven, as a guardian of the empire. All these arrangements he pretended to make by the advice of the goddess Egeria, that his barbarous subjects might more willingly submit to them. In process of time, he brought that uncivilised people to such a condition, that they managed, with piety and justice, a government which they had acquired by violence and oppression.

## CHAP. III. OF TULLUS HOSTILIUS.

To Numa Pompilius succeeded Tullus Hostilius, to whom the kingdom was voluntarily given in honour of his ability. It was he that established military discipline, and the whole art of war. Having, therefore, trained the youth in an extraordinary manner, he ventured to defy the Albans, a powerful, and, for a long time, a leading people. But as both sides, being equal in strength, were weakened by frequent engagements, the fortunes of the two people, to bring the war to a speedier decision, were committed to the Horatii and Curiatii, three twin-brothers, chosen on each side. It was a doubtful and noble conflict, and had a wonderful termination. For after three were wounded on one side, and two killed on the other, the Horatius who survived, adding subtlety to valour, counterfeited flight in order to separate his enemies, and then, attacking them one by one, as they were able to pursue him, overcame them all. Thus (an honour rarely obtained by any other) a victory was secured by the hand of

one man. But this victory he soon after sullied by a murder. He had observed his sister in tears at the sight of the spoils that he wore, which had belonged to one of the enemy betrothed to her, and chastised the love of the maiden, so unseasonably manifested, with his sword. The laws called for the punishment of the crime; but esteem for his valour saved the murderer, and his guilt was shielded by his glory.

The Alban people did not long keep their faith; for being called out, according to the treaty, to assist the Romans in the war against Fidenæ, they stood neutral betwixt the two parties, waiting for a turn of fortune. But the crafty king of the Romans, seeing his allies ready to side with the enemy, roused the courage of his army, pretending that he had ordered them so to act; hence hope arose in the breasts of our men, and fear in those of the enemy. The deceit of the traitors was accordingly without effect; and, after the enemy was conquered, Tullus caused Metius Fufetius, as a breaker of the league, to be tied between two chariots, and torn in pieces by swift horses. Alba itself, which, though the parent of Rome, was nevertheless its rival, he demolished, but previously removed all the wealth of the place, and the inhabitants themselves, to Rome, that thus a kindred city might seem not to have been destroyed, but to have been re-united to its own body.

#### CHAP. IV. OF ANCUS MARCIUS.

Next reigned Ancus Marcius, a grandson of Numa Pompilius, and of a similar disposition. He encompassed the city<sup>1</sup> with a wall, made a bridge over the Tiber, that flows through the town, and settled the colony of Ostia at the junction of the river with the sea; even then, apparently, feeling a presentiment, that the riches and supplies of the whole world would be brought to that maritime store-house of the city.

#### CHAP. V. OF TARQUINIUS PRISCUS.

Afterwards, Tarquinius Priscus, though sprung from a

<sup>1</sup> Ch. IV. The city] *Mœnia muro amplexus est.* "That *mœnia* is often used for the *buildings in cities*, is shown by Salmas. ad Lamprid. *Comm. c.*, c. 17 Schulting ad Senec. *Controv.*, vi.; and Gronov. *Obs.*, ii., 12." *Duke*

country beyond the sea, making application for the throne, obtained it through his industry and accomplishments; for, having been born at Corinth, he had joined to his Grecian wit the arts of Italy. This king increased the authority of the senate by adding to its number, and augmented the tribes with additional centuries; for Attius Nævius, a man eminent in augury, forbade their number to be increased. The king, for a trial of Nævius's skill, asked him *if that which he had conceived in his mind could be done?* The other, having tried the question by augury, answered *that it could. I was thinking then,* replied the king, *whether I could cut this whetstone with my razor.* *You can then,* rejoined the augur; and the king cut it. Hence augury came to be a sacred institution among the Romans.

Nor was the ability of Tarquinius greater in peace than in war; for he reduced, by frequent attacks, the twelve tribes of Etruria, from whom were adopted the fasces, robes of state, curule-chairs, rings, horse-trappings, military cloaks, and the gown called *prætecta*. Hence also came the custom of riding in triumph, in a gilded chariot, with four horses; as well as embroidered togæ, and striped tunics; and, in fine, all ornaments and marks of distinction by which regal dignity is rendered imposing.

#### CHAP. VI. OF SERVIUS TULLIUS.

Servius Tullius was the next that assumed the government; nor was the meanness of his extraction any hindrance to his exaltation, though he was the son of a female slave. For Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus, had improved his talents, which were extraordinary, by a liberal education; and a flame, that had been seen surrounding his head, had portended that he would be famous. Being, therefore, on the death of Tarquinius, put in the king's place, by the aid of the queen, (as if merely for a time,) he exercised the government, thus fraudulently obtained, with such effect, that he seemed to have obtained it by right. By this king the Roman people were submitted to a census, disposed into classes, and divided into *curiæ* and companies; and, through his eminent ability, the whole commonwealth was so regulated, that all distinctions of estate, dignity, age, employments, and

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