**UNIVERSITY OF 8 MAI 1945, GUELMA**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**Lecture in Culture and Civilization**

**First year, LMD**

**The World of Ancient Rome**

**The Rise of Rome**

**The Beginnings of Rome**

**The Founding of Rome**  the twins Romulus and **Remus**, the descendants of Aeneas who founded Rome were abandoned by their mother but rescued by a wolf. When the twins grew up, they fought over Rome’s location. Romulus killed his brother and traced Rome’s boundaries around the Palatine Hill.

After Romulus, a series of Roman kings ruled the city. In the 600s B.C., however, the Etruscans from northern Italy conquered Rome. In order to regain self-rule, the Romans overthrew the Etruscan king and formed a republic in 509 B.C.

**Rome’s Geography and Early Life**

After the overthrow of the Etruscans, Rome grew from a city into a country and then eventually into an empire. Its good location helped make this possible.

**Hills and River** The first settlers of Rome were the Latins. They came from a region surrounding Rome. They chose the spot for its mild climate, good farmland, and strategic location. The Latins and later settlers built Rome on seven steep hills.

During the day, settlers farmed the fertile plain at the base of the hills. At night, they returned to their hilltop homes, from which they could defend themselves against attack. Rome had other advantages. It was located a short distance from the Mediterranean Sea on ancient trade routes. It also lay next to the Tiber River. This river was important to Rome’s development because it provided a source of water for farming and drinking.

**Italian Peninsula** Rome’s location on the Italian Peninsula also played an important role in its development. The **peninsula** stretches south from Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. Italy’s location on the Mediterranean made it relatively easy for Roman ships to reach the other lands around the sea. This position helped Rome to eventually conquer and gain new territories.

The two main mountain ranges of Italy helped protect Rome. The Alps border Italy on the north, and the Apennines form Italy’s spine, running for more than 800 miles down the peninsula.

**Farm Life** Most early Romans worked small plots of land. They planted grains such as wheat and barley, and they grew beans, vegetables, and fruit. Later the Romans learned to grow olives and grapes. They raised pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens, and they used oxen to pull their plows. In ancient Rome, only wealthy farmers, who could afford to wait a few years to harvest the first crop, grew grapes.

**The Rise of the Republic**

As Rome developed into a complex civilization, two classes arose. Inequalities between them would lead to conflict. This conflict, however, would eventually define Roman citizenship and the rights of citizens under Roman law. For the next 500 years, the Romans operated under a political system that serves as a model for many of today’s democratic nations.

**Patricians and Plebeians** In Ancient Rome, the upper-class **patricians** were wealthy landowners who held high government positions. The **plebeians** were commoners who were allowed to vote but not to hold government office in ancient Rome. Resentment over the patricians’ power caused tension. Finally, the patricians passed a written constitution, called the Twelve Tables, around 450 B.C. The Twelve Tables established basic rights and duties for Roman citizens.

**Republican Government** The leaders of the Roman Republic established a tripartite government. This type of government has three branches: legislative, judicial, and executive. The legislative branch makes the laws. The judicial branch interprets the laws in court. And the executive branch enforces a country’s laws.

**The Three Branches** The legislative branch of Roman government included the **Senate** and the assemblies. The Senate was a powerful body of 300 members that advised Roman leaders. Most senators were patricians. The assemblies were mainly made up of plebeians. Their representatives protected the rights of plebeians.

The judicial branch consisted of eight judges who served for one year. They oversaw the courts and governed the provinces. Two **consuls** led Rome’s executive branch. They commanded the army and directed the government for one year. Each consul had the power to veto, or overrule, the other.

**The Republic Expands**

For hundreds of years after the founding of the republic, Rome expanded its territories. By the 300s B.C., the Romans dominated central Italy. By 275 B.C., all of the Italian Peninsula was under Roman control.

In general, Rome did not impose harsh rule on conquered peoples. The republic offered Roman citizenship to most of them and allowed them to govern themselves. In return, the new citizens had to pay taxes and provide soldiers for the Roman army.

**Effects of Expansion** The Roman conquerors brought back great wealth and many slaves. They bought large estates and farmed them with slave labor. But because many small farmers couldn’t compete, they lost their farms. As a result, unemployment and poverty increased. The gap between rich and poor grew wider. This, in turn, produced more anger and tension between the classes. As you will read in the next section, these factors, among others, contributed to the overthrow of the republic.

