

CLAH4006

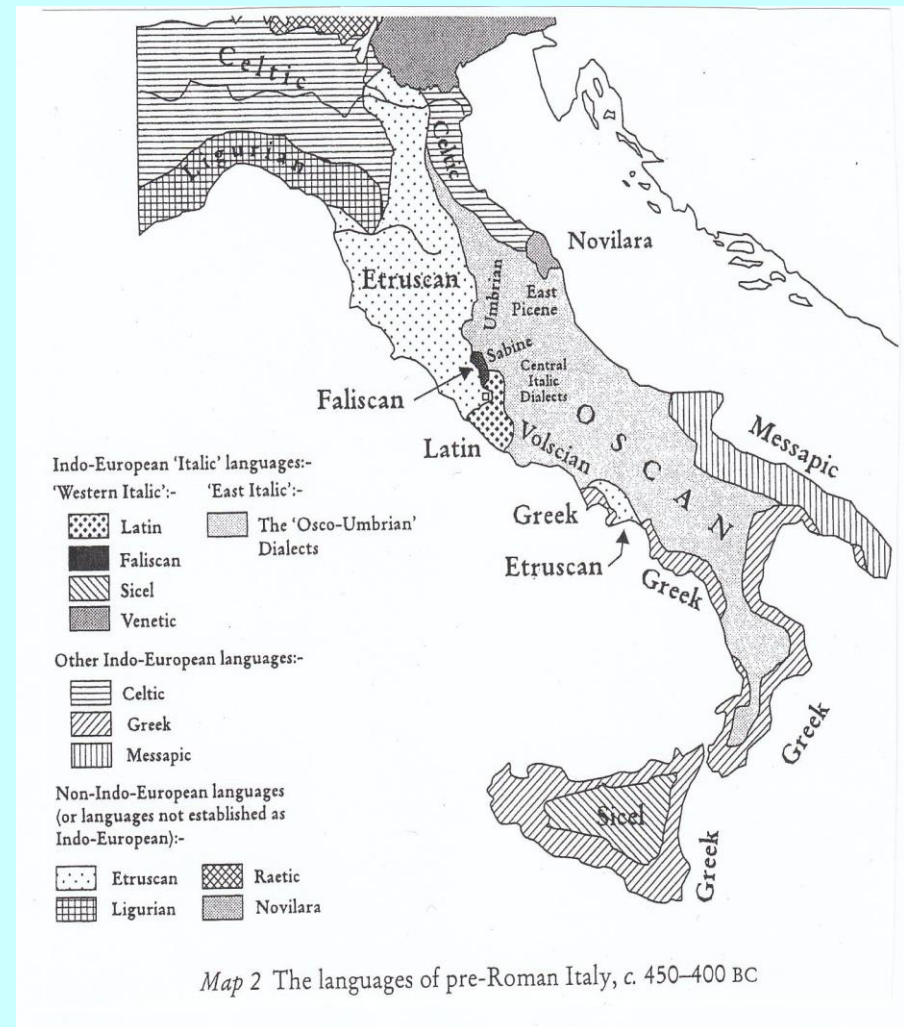
**From Village to Empire: An
Introduction to the History of Rome**

Early Conquests and Pyrrhus

Dr Matthew Adam Cobb

Rome and Her Neighbours

- Rome's treaty with Carthage – **Polybius 3.22.4-13** – Ardea, Antium, Laurentium, Circeii, Tarracina.
- Battle at Lake Regillus.
- Latin League.
- *foedus Cassianum* ('Cassian treaty') of 493 BC - **Dionysius of Halicarnassus 6.95.2-3.**



“The provisions of the treaty were as follows: ‘Let there be peace between the Romans and all the Latin cities as long as the heavens and the earth shall remain where they are. Let them neither make war upon another themselves nor bring in foreign enemies nor grant a safe passage to those who shall make war upon either. Let them assist one another, when warred upon, with all their forces, and let each have an equal share of the spoils and booty taken in their common wars. Let suits relating to private contracts be determined within ten days, and in the nation where the contract was made. And let it not be permitted to add anything to, or take anything away from these treaties except by the consent both of the Romans and of all the Latins.’ This was the treaty entered into by the Romans and the Latins and confirmed by their oaths sworn over the sacrificial victims.” - **Dionysius of Halicarnassus 6.95.2-3.**

Aequi and Volsci

- Pressure from the Aequi, Volsci and the city of Veii.
- 486 BC – Hernici make an alliance with Rome.
- Colonies established in territory taken or recovered from the Volsci.



“Coriolanus, almost like one demented, sprung from his seat to embrace his mother. She, changing her tone from entreaty to anger, said, ‘Before I admit your embrace suffer me to know whether it is to an enemy or a son that I have come, whether it is as your prisoner or as your mother that I am in your camp... Here the good fortune of Rome destroyed the two armies of her enemies in a conflict no less ruinous than obstinate.’ - **Livy 2.40.5, 13.**

Veii

- Battle of Cremera 479 BC – failed attempt to capture bridge at Fidenae.
- A. Cornelius Cossus slays Tolumnius king of Veians.
- Siege of Veii lasting from 405-396 BC.
- Extent of Roman territory doubled.

“Some attacked the enemy on the walls from behind, others forced back the bars of the gates, others again set fire to the houses from which stones and tiles were being hurled by women and slaves. Everything resounded with the confused noise of terrifying threats and shrieks of despairing anguish blended with the wailing of women and children. In a very short time the defenders were driven from the walls and the city gates flung open.” – **Livy 5.21.**

Sack of Rome

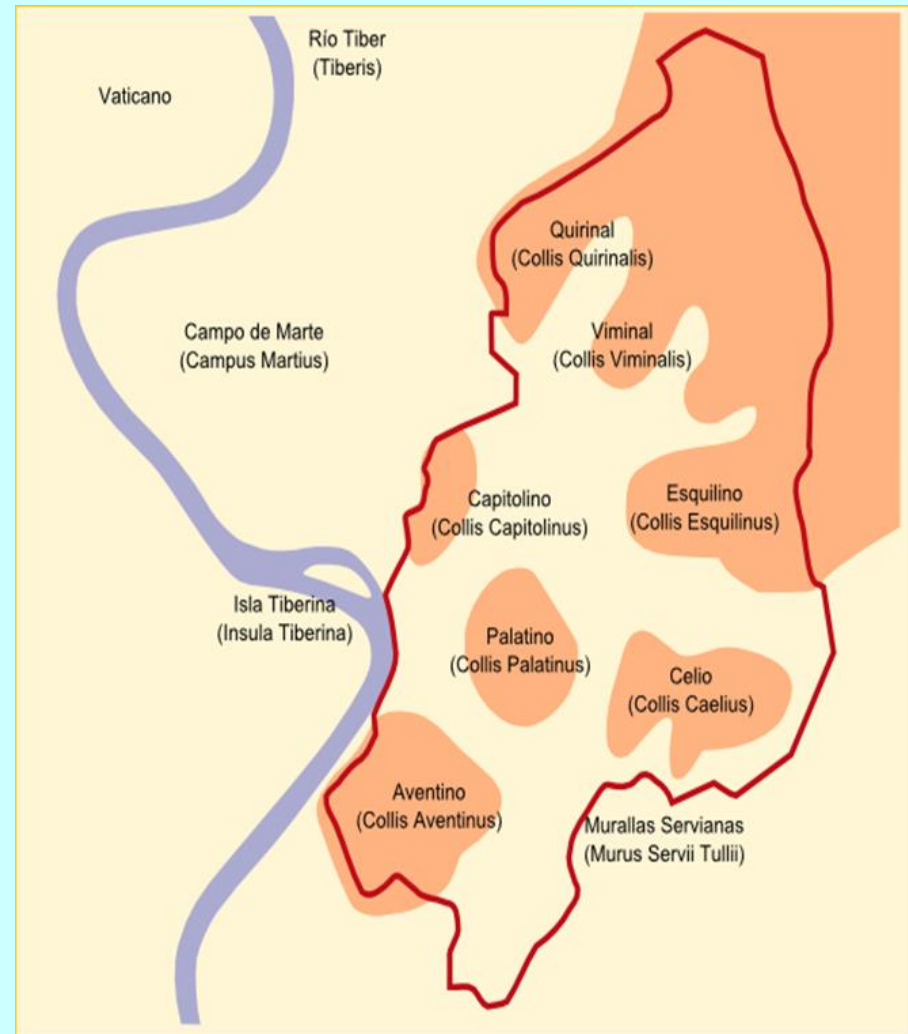
- Migration of Gallic peoples into Cisalpine Gaul.
- Sack of Rome in 390 BC – refuge on heights of Capitoline Hill.

“...Brennus, the Gaulish chieftain, and an agreement was arrived at by which 1000 lbs. of gold was fixed as the ransom of a people destined before long to rule the world. This disgrace was bad enough as it was, but it was made worse by the vile meanness of the Gauls, who produced unjust weights, and when the tribune protested, the insolent Gaul threw his sword into the scale, with an exclamation unbearable to Roman ears, ‘Woe to the vanquished!’ – **Livy 5.48.8-9.**

Regrouping, Rebuilding

- A number Latin allies renounce allegiance.
- Attacks from Aequi, Volsci and Etruscans.
- Gallic incursions into Alban Hill country in 360 BC.

“...new debts were being contracted to meet a tax imposed for the construction of a stone wall for which the censors had made a contract.” - **Livy 6.32.1** - 378 BC.



Manipular Warfare

- Earlier use of heavy infantry – phalanx style warfare.
- Maniples - units of two centuries trained to fight independently within the legion.
- *velites*, *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*.



The Rise of Rome

- More internal stability by 366 BC.
- Old Latin League disbanded in 338 BC – settlement after the Latin War (340-338 BC) - **Livy 8.14.1-12.**
- Creation of “citizenship without vote” (*civitas sine suffragio*).



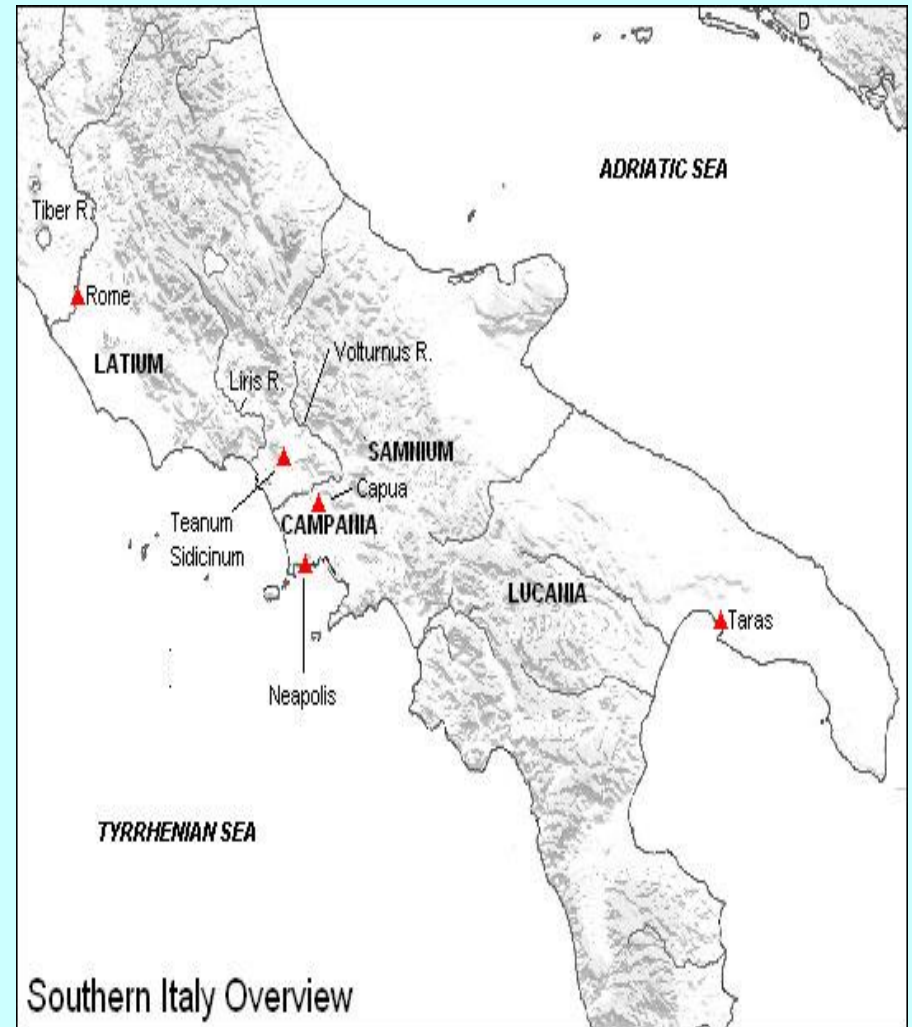
The “Samnites”

- Significant Sabellian conquests in southern Italy by 350 BC.
- First Samnite War (343-341 BC).
- Second Samnite War (326-304 BC).
- Disaster at “Caudine Forks” – 321 BC.

“The consuls were the first to be sent, little more than half-clothed, under the yoke, then each in the order of his rank was exposed to the same disgrace, and finally, the legionaries one after another. Around them stood the enemy fully armed, reviling and jeering at them; swords were pointed at most of them, and when they offended their victors by showing their indignation and resentment too plainly some were wounded and even killed.” – **Livy 9.6.1-2.**

Battle of Sentinum

- Third Samnite War (298-290 BC).
- Battle of Sentinum fought in Umbrian territory in 295 BC - coalition of Samnites, Etruscans, Gauls and Umbrians.
- Conquest of Etruria complete between 284-282 BC.



Benefits to Rome

- Rome at war every year between 343-241 BC (except for 331, 328, 288, 287 and 285).
- Large tracts of land acquired from defeated states.
- Foundation of colonies (particularly Latin colonies) improved social conditions.
- Increasing access to slaves (important after the abolition of debt-bondage in either 326 or 313 BC).
- Increase in building activity – Temple of Bellona, vowed in 296 BC, Temple of Jupiter Victor vowed in 295 BC.
- Construction of the Appian way and Appian Aqueduct by Appius Claudius Caecus after 312 BC.



The Pyrrhic War

City of Tarentum

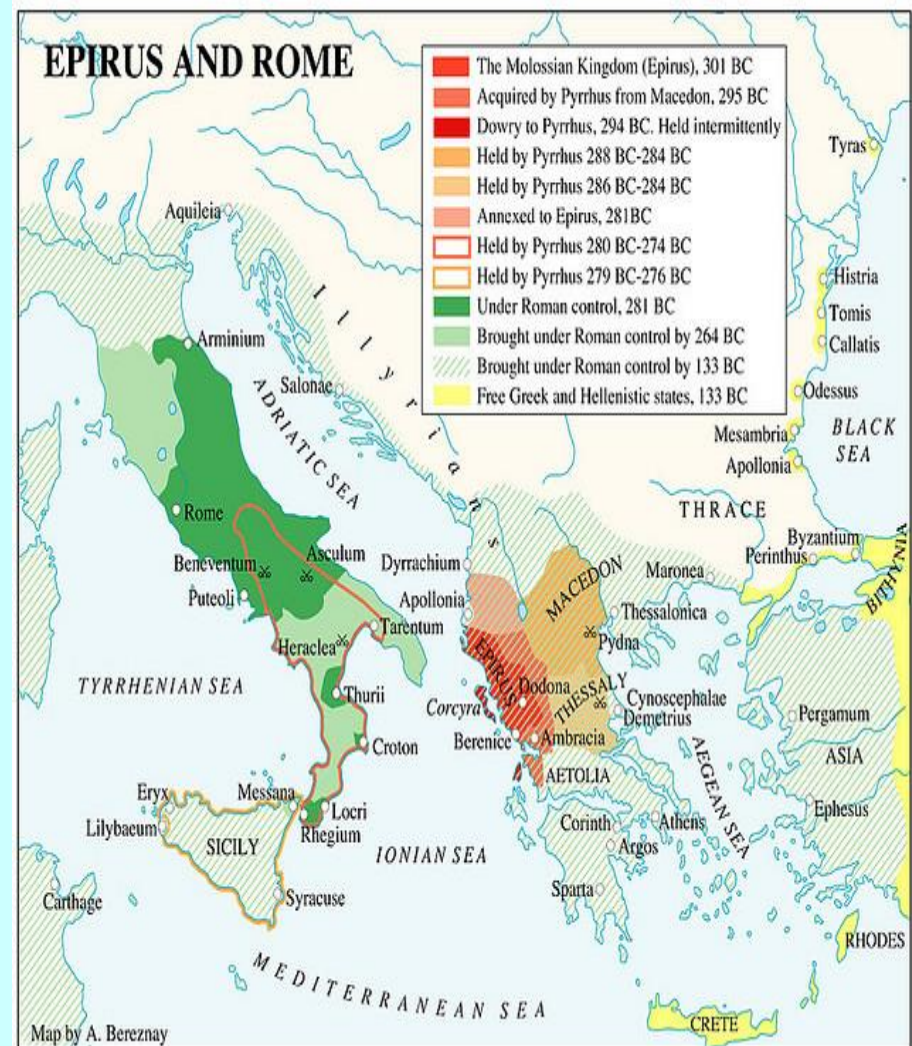
- Moderately prosperous democracy able to field 15,000 men.
- Roman force sent to aid Thurii in 282 BC.
- Tarentine army and navy attack Roman relief force.



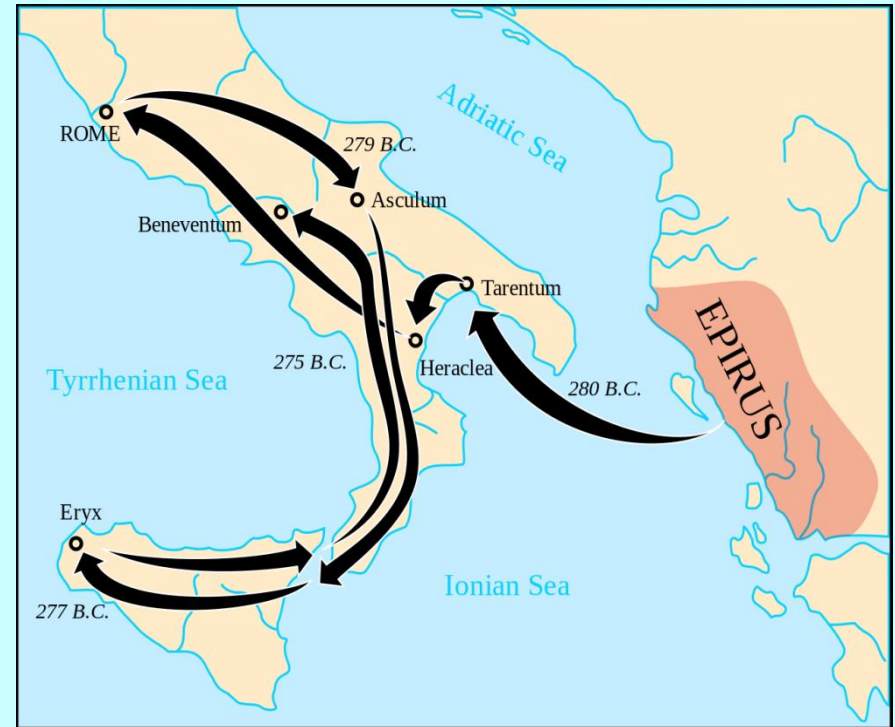
“Postumius was sent as ambassador to the Tarentines... far from paying heed to him or thinking seriously... [the Tarentines] rather to see if he would make any slip in the finer points of the Greek language, and then laughed, became exasperated at his belligerence, which they called barbarous, and finally were ready to drive him out of the theatre. As the Romans were departing... a man named Philonides.. being still full of yesterday's wine, as soon as the ambassadors drew near, pulled up his garment, and assuming a posture most shameful to behold, bespattered the sacred robe of the ambassador with the filth that is indecent even to be uttered... laughter burst out from the whole theatre and the most insolent clapped their hands, Postumius... turned to the crowd and showed his defiled robe... [he said] ‘will wash out this robe with much blood’.” — **Dionysius of Halicarnassus 19.5.1-4.**

Pyrrhus of Epirus

“And so the decree was ratified, and the people sent ambassadors to Pyrrhus, not only from their own number, but also from the Italian Greeks. These brought gifts to Pyrrhus, and told him they wanted a leader of reputation and prudence, and that he would find there large forces gathered from Lucania, Messapia, Samnium, and Tarentum, amounting to twenty thousand horse and three hundred and fifty thousand foot all told. This not only exalted Pyrrhus himself, but also inspired the Epeirots with eagerness to undertake the expedition.” – **Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 13.5.**



Battle of Heraclea - 280 BC



“At last, when the Romans were more than ever crowded back by the elephants, and their horses, before they got near the animals, were terrified and ran away with their riders, Pyrrhus brought his Thessalian cavalry upon them while they were in confusion and routed them with great slaughter.” - **Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 17.3.**

Battle of Asculum – 279 BC

“...we are told that Pyrrhus said to one who was congratulating him on his victory, "If we are victorious in one more battle with the Romans, we shall be utterly ruined." For he had lost a great part of the forces with which he came, and all his friends and generals except a few...” – **Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 21.9-10.**

“A further and final treaty with Carthage was made by the Romans at the time of Pyrrhus' invasion before the Carthaginians had begun the war for Sicily. In this they maintain all the previous agreements and add the following: ‘If they make an alliance with Pyrrhus, both shall make it an express condition that they may go to the help of each other in whichever country is attacked. No matter which require help, the Carthaginians are to provide the ships for transport and hostilities, but each country shall provide the pay for its own men. The Carthaginians, if necessary, shall come to the help of the Romans by sea too, but no one shall compel the crews to land against their will.’” – **Polybius 3.25.1-5.**

Pyrrhus goes to Sicily

“Then Sicily appeared to offer opportunities for greater successes, since Libya [Africa] was felt to be near, and he turned in this direction, and at once sent out Cineas to hold initial talks with the cities, as was his habit, while he himself threw a garrison into Tarentum. The Tarentines were very annoyed at this, and demanded that he either apply himself to the task for which he had come, namely to help them in their war with Rome, or else abandon their territory and leave them their city as he had found it. To this demand he made no very gracious reply, but ordering them to keep quiet and await his convenience, he sailed off.” – **Plutarch Pyrrhus 22.2-3.**



Pyrrhus Returns to Italy

- Failed attempt to ambush Curius Denatus.
- Pyrrhus cuts his losses.
- Tarentine garrison gives up city in 272 BC.



“But the power of the Samnites had been shattered, and their spirits were broken, in consequence of many defeats at the hands of the Romans. They also cherished considerable resentment against Pyrrhus because of his expedition to Sicily; hence not many of them came to join him... This gave the victory to the Romans, and at the same time the advantage also in the struggle for supremacy. For having acquired high courage and power and a reputation for invincibility from their valour in these struggles, they at once got control of Italy, and soon afterwards of Sicily. – **Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 25.**

Overview of Important Dates

- 493 Cassian treaty struck with the Latins.
- 396 Fall of Veii
- 390 Sack of Rome by the Gauls (or 387; so Polybius)
- 378 Construction of the 'Servian' wall
- 354 Treaty with Samnites
- 343-341 First Samnite War
- 340-338 Latin revolt.
- 328 Colony established at Fregellae
- 326-304 Second Samnite War
- 321 Roman army ambushed in the Caudine Forks
- 315 battle of Lautulae (a Roman defeat?)
- 312 Work begins on the Appian way (*via Appia*)
- 298-290 Third Samnite War
- 295 Great battle at Sentinum. Romans defeat combined army of Samnites, Gauls, Etruscans and Umbrians.
- 280 Tarentum invites King Pyrrhus of Epirus to Italy
- 280 Battle at Heraclea
- 279 Battle at Asculum
- 278-276 Pyrrhus in Sicily (returns to Italy in 276)
- 275 Pyrrhus defeated near Malventum (later Beneventum)
- 264-241 First Punic War. (see next lecture)

Bibliography

- Cary, M. and Scullard, H. H. (1975), *A History of Rome*. Basingstoke.
- Cornell, T. J. (1989), 'The conquest of Italy', in F. W. Walbank, et al., eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume VII part 2, second edition. Cambridge: 351-419.
- Franke, P. R. (1989), 'Pyrrhus', in F. W. Walbank, et al., eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, volume VII part 2, second edition. Cambridge: 456-485.
- Oakley, S. P. (2004), 'The Early Republic', in H. I Flower, ed., *The Roman Republic*. Cambridge: 15-30.
- Oakley, S. P. (1993), 'The Roman Conquest of Italy', in J. Rich and G. Shipley, eds., *War and Society in the Roman World*. London: 9-37.