

# Notes on Quiz #7: Early Rome

## 1. What factors helped make Carthage the strongest power in the western Mediterranean?

Carthage was founded by the Phoenicians, and inherited their trading model based on converting natural resources into high-value luxury goods and entrepreneurial trade routes in which master traders took a handful of ships great distances to trade with many markets.

Geographically, Carthage was positioned at the choking point between the western and eastern Mediterranean, putting it in a position to control east-west trade and dominate the western Med. In addition, Carthage was possessed of two excellent natural harbors, making it an ideal trading port and shipbuilding facility. Carthage became a powering trading power and maritime force at a time when few other important cities had developed along the coasts of the western Mediterranean; with those cities that were there, including the Greek colonies in Sicily, the Etruscan city-states, and early Rome, Carthage made trading partnerships or treaties of mutual benefit.

## 2. In Rome, who was the paterfamilias? What kind of authority did he have?

The paterfamilias was the senior male figure in an extended family (all those connected by a vertical male bloodline). According to custom and law, the paterfamilias was the owner of all the family's property, and the sole representative of its interests to the public. All that happened within the family—private matters, as contrasted with public matters (*res publica*)—were entirely in the hands of the paterfamilias, who had complete power (*patria potestas*) of justice and disposition over all the men, women, children, freedmen, slaves, and possessions of his bloodline, up to and including the right to execute or sell into slavery.

In practice, this absolute power was mitigated by the need to consider the reputation of the family within the community, and by the advice of the family council and of the senior matron of the family.

## 3. How did the Roman monarchy end?

According to legend, the son of the tyrannical seventh king, Tarquin Superbus, raped the most virtuous woman in Rome, Lucretia. This sparked an uprising among the nobility, who ended the monarchy and declared a Republic.

### EC1. Early Italy was inhabited by all of the following EXCEPT:

- (a) Etruscans
- ✓ (b) Egyptians
- (c) Samnites
- (d) Greeks

### EC2. What stories did the Romans tell of the founding of their city? What do these stories suggest to you about how the Romans saw themselves?

There were two separate traditions regarding the founding. One was that Aeneas founded Rome, giving Rome a heroic founder who, as a Trojan, was on a level with the Greeks (whom the Romans saw as culturally advanced).

The more common story is that Rome was founded by Romulus, who was abandoned as a baby with his brother Remus and nursed by a she-wolf. Romulus killed Remus and became the first king. His actions and association with the wolf suggest that Romans saw themselves as ruthless men who do what is necessary.

### EC3. Now that you've finished *Clouds*, what do you think Aristophanes intended his audiences to get from the play?

There are a lot of possible answers to this question. *Clouds* calls attention to the danger posed by the abandonment of traditional beliefs and religion, which until recently had been Athens's moral foundation.

The sophists teaching relative morality, and people like Socrates challenging traditional beliefs, leads directly to the dissipation of Pheidippides, who spends heedlessly, selfishly puts his father in debt, and ultimately attacks his father because he has been taught morality is whatever you want it to be.

The peril is urgent, as already Pheidippides (whose father starts and ends embracing tradition) and the audience itself (during the debate) is compromised and corrupted.