

Name _____

Date _____

Ancient Rome

The Romulus and Remus Legend

Romulus and Remus are the mythological twin brothers who founded the city of Rome. Here is their story

Twins are Born:

Romulus and Remus were twin boys born to a princess named Rhea Silvia. Their father was the fierce Roman god of war, Mars. The king where the boys lived was scared that someday Romulus and Remus would overthrow him and take his throne so he had the boys left in a basket on the Tiber River. He figured they would soon die.

Raised by a Wolf:

Instead of dying, the boys were found by a she-wolf. The wolf cared for them and protected them from other wild animals. A friendly woodpecker helped to find them food. Eventually some shepherds happened across the twins. One shepherd took the boys home and raised them as his own children.



Romulus and Remus as babies found by a shepherd

Growing Up:

As the boys grew older they became natural leaders. One day Remus was captured and taken to the king. He discovered his true identity. Romulus gathered some shepherds to rescue his brother. They ended up killing the king. When the city learned who the boys were, they offered to crown them as joint kings. They could be rulers of their homeland. However, they turned down the crowns because they wanted to found their own city. The twins left and set out to find the perfect spot for their city.

Founding a New City:

The twins eventually came to the place where Rome is located today. They both liked the general area, but each wanted to place the city on a different hill. Romulus wanted the city to be on top of Palatine Hill while Remus preferred Aventine Hill. They agreed to wait for a sign from the gods, called an **omen**, to determine which hill to use. Remus saw the sign of six vultures first, but Romulus saw twelve. Each claimed to have won.

Remus is Killed:

Romulus went ahead and started building a wall around Palatine Hill. However, Remus was jealous and began to make fun of Romulus' wall. At one point Remus jumped over the wall to show how easy it was to cross. Romulus became angry and killed Remus.

Rome is Founded:

With Remus dead, Romulus continued to work on his city. He officially founded the city on April 21, 753 BC, making himself king, and naming it Rome after himself. From there he began to organize the city. He divided his army into legions of 3,300 men. He called his 100 most noble men the Patricians and the elders of Rome the Senate. The city grew and prospered. For over 1,000 years Rome would be one of the most powerful cities in the world.

Interesting Facts about Romulus and Remus:

- The boys were descendents of the Trojan prince and great warrior Aeneas made famous from Virgil's epic poem the Aeneid.
- In another version of the story the father of the boys is the hero Hercules.
- Over time, the city of Rome expanded to cover the seven surrounding hills of Aventine Hill, Caelian Hill, Capitoline Hill, Esquiline Hill, Palatine Hill, Quirinal Hill, and Viminal Hill.
- Romulus died when he mysteriously disappeared in a whirlwind.
- The poet Ovid once wrote that Romulus was turned into a god named Quirinus and went to live on Mount Olympus with his father Mars.