

# Roman Republic

## Main features of the Roman Republic:

**Magistrates:** replaced the King, were appointed lictors. Elected officials who 'run' Rome.

**Lictors:** Bodyguards hired by important people. They carried fasces.

**Consuls:** Controlled the army and were the most important magistrates. 2 consuls were selected per year.

**Censors:** administrators of Rome that managed finances. Also decided the membership of the different classes.

**Dictator:** Only in times of emergency, could only rule for 6 months at a time. Really powerful and would control everything. A Master of the horse would be appointed so they couldn't abuse their power.

**Master of the horse:** Dictator's deputy that kept them in line.

## Key events: Silvia Arisia (509BC)

- Superbus gets the Veii to go to war against Rome.
- Arruns (head of Tarquin's army) sees Brutus (head of Rome's army), they charge straight into each other, impaling each other upon sight. They both die.
- The battle is inconclusive but the Romans win because they had one more soldier alive.
- Superbus and the Veii run away.
- Brutus is mourned.

## Lars Porsena (508BC)

- Superbus approaches Lars Porsena, King of Clusium for help.
- Lars tells Rome they need to reinstate Superbus or return his possessions.
- Rome refuses and Clusium declares war.
- Lars' army takes control of the Janiculum, gaining the upper hand.
- 3 men volunteer to defend the bridge into the city. (one was a relative of the 3 Albans, his name was Horatius Cocles.)
- He fought bravely but the bridge is broken. Cocles swam around aimlessly until he was either stabbed in the bum or drowned.
- Cocles was remembered as a hero.
- Lars sieges Rome.
- Caius plans to assassinate Lars. The senate agrees.
- He kills Lars' secretary by accident.
- He is caught and makes up a lie that there are 299 more assassins coming to kill him.
- Lars is scared and makes peace with the Romans. They exchange hostages. They also guarantee the Veii safety from Rome.

## Lake Regillus (496 BC)

Dictator: Postumius

Key events overview:

Patricians get very involved with fighting.

Superbus gets wounded.

Dictator is OK, Master of the horse is retired from battle.

Publicola's brother (Valerius) dies.

Dictator decides to kill any Romans retreating.

Dictator makes cavalry fight on foot.

Latin commander Mamilius kills the Master of the horse.

Titus Hermunius kills Latin commander Mamilius.

He then goes to retrieve the armour for the temple of Jupiter but gets a lance through the back and dies.

The Romans win.

## The first secession of Rome

Patron/Client relationships break down. The senate vs. Plebians

Key events:

Old man enters the forum.

He is recognised as an important veteran (commander) who had fallen into crippling debt because of war, taxes and Patricians.

The people uproar, outraged.

The mob calls for the Senate, threatening them.

The senators are scared and not enough of them are there to make decisions.

Two consuls: Appius Claudius and Servilius

Claudius arrests some plebians to set an example.

Servilius wants to persuade them instead.

Volscians invade and the Plebians refuse to fight.

Servilius says if they fight he will release them from their debt.

The plebs fight and win, defeating the Volscians.

Everyone is happy except from Claudius.

Claudius cancels their debt relief and the people uproar.

Claudius appoints dictator Manius Valerius to crush the rebellion.

Valerius appeals to the people instead.

CLAUDIUS

A headstrong man who was settling the matter with the plebs by arresting them.

He later undermines Servilius and cancels debt relief

SERVILIUS

More inclined to gentle measures, believed that it was safer and easier to persuade the plebians.

His persuasive behaviour led them to win against the Volscians.

Rome's first secession caused a famine.

Menenius says they are all part of the same body and need to work together.

Sichius, the leader of the Plebian secession forced the senate to give the Plebians tribunes, so that they would have a voice in the senate.

### How effective were the Plebian tribunes?

2 plebian tribunes were appointed.

Because of the famine caused by the 1st secession, someone called Marcius Coriolanus says that the Plebs should be left to starve.

The tribunes indicted him and demanded that he be put on trial.

Coriolanus ignored them so they threatened violence.

The plebs riot so the senators agree to use Coriolanus as a scapegoat and set fair food prices.

Rather than face trial Coriolanus flees to the Volsci.

### Agrarian laws 486 BC

Tribunes proposed what the Plebs really wanted - a series of Agrarian laws.

### Volero Publilius 473 BC

Volero Publilius, a plebian, refused to join the army as a soldier as he had previously served as a commander. To avoid arrest he told the people that the tribunes were too scared or too friendly with the senate to help the people. The mob turned on the lictors and he escaped.

The senate assembled to decide how to punish Volero. The elder senators urged caution and Volero was freed.

Volero successfully campaigned to become the next tribune in 472 BC. He demanded a change to the tribune voting system. Livy suggested that Volero was right to demand reform, rather than to incite sedition.

Volero's request frightened the Senate. If Volero's proposals were accepted, then the patricians would have no control over the elections of tribunes. Anyone could become a tribune.

Appius Claudius' son Appius Claudius (No. 2) was elected as consul. Volero and Appius clashed violently. To prevent civil unrest, Appius Claudius was coerced into accepting the law.

### The indictment of Appius Claudius

In 470 BC, Appius Claudius was indicted by the tribunes. Appius refused to acknowledge the charges against him. This caused widespread unrest. The trial was suspended until a later date to avoid further conflict. During the suspension Appius died.

The Volero reforms had strengthened the tribunes. The reduction of senatorial influence allowed the plebians to elect people who were more likely to represent them.

## Gaius Terentilius and the demand to limit consular power

Quintus Fabius proposed in 467 BC that land taken from the Volsci could be used to create a colony for the plebians. By creating a colony, Fabius was able to offer new land to Roman plebians. Reducing the demand for land reform weakened the influence of the tribunes.

Gaius Terentilius Harsa adopted a new approach. The absence of the consuls gave him an opportunity to demand constitutional reform. Terentilius demanded a written constitution to define and limit the powers of the consul. Terentilius claimed that consuls abused their power and acted with more freedom than kings.

Quintus Fabius attacked Terentilius and called him a traitor. Fabius asked Terentilius to present his ideas to the consuls when they returned. The senate agreed that Terentilius' ideas were worth investigating, but they would not vote on the matter until they had more information. This gave the Senate the excuse not to do anything.

## The creation of the Decemvirate

The tribunes always realised that the senate wouldn't take Terentilius' demands seriously.

By 454 BC, a new spirit of cooperation began. Ambassadors were sent to Athens to investigate its laws, the laws of Solon.

On their return in 452 BC, the senate created the Decemvirate, a ruling body of 10 men.

The consuls and tribunes were replaced by 10 patricians men and a new law code was enforced.

Livy said the first decemvirate was 'just and fair.'

Appius Claudius Crassus (No. 3) created the first ten tables of law. When they were first displayed, the plebians flocked to see them in the forum. Despite widespread approval, they wanted more laws. It was agreed that 10 new men were to be elected for this purpose.

The plebians were so happy with the Decemvirate that they didn't want tribunes.

Appius Claudius Crassus became a hero to the people of Rome, especially the plebians.

Crassus was in fact deceiving the people of Rome.

## The second Decemvirate

Many senators were concerned by Crassus and stupidly put him in charge of electing the 10 men.

Manipulating the selection process, Appius elects himself and 9 allies. They were called 'the ten Tarquins'.

The second Decemvirate becomes a tyranny, each member had 12 bodyguards.

Crassus attacks the Plebeians and his enemies, holding unfair trials in their own homes.

In 449 BC, they said they were to rule for another year.

## Opposition of Valerius and Horatius

Crassus and the 2nd Decemvirate rule Rome unchecked.

The Sabines and Aequi attack Roman colonies, no senators or plebeians cooperated.

Crassus used lictors to forcibly assemble a quorum. Valerius and Horatius stand up against them. An army was assembled, however they lose.

## The abduction of Virginia

Crassus lusted after a plebeian girl called Virginia. Virginia was engaged to Lucius Icilius, a former tribune.

Despite his pleas, Virginia turns Crassus down, leading Crassus to ask his friend to claim that she was a runaway slave.

She is put on trial, during which she asks to be granted extra time. Crassus agrees but only if she sleeps with him.

Lucius Icilius exposes Crassus' plans and she is granted extra time with no conditions.

During this time, Virginia contacts her father, he returns from war. At the trial the next day she accompanies her father, Verginius, to the trial, evidence that she was not a slave.

Crassus dismisses this evidence, calling Virginia a slave and Verginius a traitor.

Knowing that there is nothing else he could do, Verginius stabs his daughter, killing her, but sparing her from a life of cruelty and abuse.

Verginius then runs away back to his military camp.

## The second Secession

On return to his camp, Verginius addresses his fellow troops, encouraging them to go back to Rome and abandon the battle.

The senate sent envoys to talk to the troops but they would only speak to Valerius and Horatius, who tell the senate that they would only negotiate if the Decemvirate was removed.

The Plebians moved all their families to the Sacred mount again. Rome was empty.

Left with no choice, the Decemvirate agreed to step aside, but only if they were protected.

The plebians disagreed but restored consuls and tribunes.

## The Valerio-Horatian laws

After the Plebs asked for something, they were met with a compromise: 10 Tribunes.

Verginius and Lucius Icilius were 2/10 tribunes.

Valerius and Horatius are elected as consuls.

Laws were made to protect the Plebians.

## Appius Claudius Crassus' indictment

Crassus was indicted by the tribunes. He kills himself before the trial.

The remainder of the Decemvirate do the same or flee.

## The twelve tables of Rome

Valerius and Horatius, before destroying the Sabine army, published the 12 tables of law, available to all in simple, precise language, they gave all Roman citizens basic civil rights.

- Attendance
- Theft
- Lending and debtors
- Family law and rights of father
- inheritance
- Possession, ownership, slavery
- Criminal acts
- Property law
- Public law and treason
- Religious law
- Protected Patricians
- Protected Patricians.

## Law changes by 440 BC

The plebs demand more change. One tribune used his power to overthrow the marriage ban between Patricians and Plebs, and that Plebs could run for consul.

The senate offered a compromise. Plebians could now be military tribunes, giving them the power to command armies and seek the same victorious glory as consuls.