

Introduction to Rome

Legendary Founding...

- according to legend, Romulus and Remus were the sons of Mars, the war god
- they were abandoned, and were raised by a she-wolf
- a shepherd discovered them later, and the two boys decided to build a city where they were found
 - the two boys argued about who would be in charge
 - Romulus killed Remus, and named the city after himself

- Rome always had a bloody past, but oddly enough, a bloody beginning
- this motif would be repeated for nearly 1000 years as the great Roman Empire flourished

Early Days...

- Rome was founded around 750 BCE
- it began as a small village on the banks of the Tiber River, but grew into the largest city in the western world

- how did this happen?
 - war is easiest way to expand an empire
 - most of what Rome gained was through fighting
 - Rome fought with and conquered its neighbours – Greece, Thrace, Macedonia

- as Rome racked up victories, its army grew
- the choice was simple to the defeated: join the empire, or be massacred to a person

- trade was a good way to acquire wealth
 - Rome set up trade networks with its defeated territories
 - charged taxes and made money off of others
 - Roman citizens had luxuries never seen prior in the western world (spices, incense, etc.)

- alliances with various groups
 - often, people would ask the Romans for help against invaders
 - Rome would agree to help, would take their army to the problem, and would leave it
 - Rome expanded “peacefully” this way

- greed and power
 - Romans *loved* being the center of the universe
 - the lust for more territory helped them expand farther than anyone had before

 - problems of this?
 - how do you police all its people?
 - how do you effectively govern?
 - how do you communicate across the empire?
 - how do you keep your people happy?
 - etc.