

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDING OF ROME

For some time now, the founding of Rome has been accredited to truculent Latin rustics lost in the miasma of VIII. century BC history. The more glorious legend of its establishment by Homeric heroes, particularly Aeneas, prince of Troy, has been in abeyance. However, in the light of recent theory and newly uncovered fact, the two stories can be blended into a credible account. To suggest the new history is my purpose here.

To begin with, I would allude to two larger ideas, which we shall be carrying into the Italian setting. One is the increasing probability that a period of over 400 years of accepted chronology around the Mediterranean world did not exist and should be stricken from the record. These are the so-called Dark Ages of Greece, which were placed in the historical record in the first place to correspond with four hundred years of Egyptian chronology that were also non-existent. "The Aegean prehistorians", writes J. Cadogan, "have no choice but to adapt themselves to the Egyptologists"¹.

This may seem still to be true to most ancient historians, but a generation ago Velikovsky, in his book *Ages in Chaos*, knocked out the Egyptian centuries at issue and, following his cues respecting the Greek Dark Ages, I. Isaacson (Schorr), the *Review of the Society for Interdisciplinary Studies* of England, the journal *Kronos*, Velikovsky himself, and even the present writer have worked to close the Greek time gap.

Hence, it is possible now to connect Cadmus of Thebes with Akhnaton, the burning of Pylos with the destruction of Troy, to tie together in fact a number of natural catastrophes and movements of people that Claude Schaeffer had coordinated in time, and that could readily be slipped down by four hundred years into the VIII. century. For Schaeffer's inventory of destroyed sites of the XIII. century "Peoples of the Sea" period reveals that these settlements were succeeded by towns of archaic Greek, Greco-Roman, or other much more modern settings not older than the VIII. century.

¹ An extension of remarks at a conference of the Canadian Society for Interdisciplinary Studies at Lake Kashagawigamog, Ontario, August, 1983.

The case of Troy, so close to our subject here, is especially instructive about the pseudo-time gap. As J. N. Sammer sums up the evidence², Troy-Hisarlik VIIb was the last Bronze Age city of the famous site. There followed a Greek town of the VII century or later; no deposits intervened. Furthermore, there was an abundant continuity. Grey Minoan pottery was found in Troy VI, Troy VII, and the Greek Age Troy. The forms of settlement were identical in the Late Bronze Age (supposedly the XII. Century) and the -700 or later Greek settlement. A Late Bronze house was obviously used by VII. century Greeks. Beset by the dogmas of Egyptian chronology, scholars such as Blegen and Coldstream resorted to the excuse of an abandonment followed by contamination in a mixing of debris.

In Egypt this was the time around the pharaoh Ramses III, on whose temple of Medinet Habu relating to the year 8 is recorded the "Invasion of Sea Peoples," that "They were coming while the flame was prepared before them, forward toward Egypt"³.

Fire "before them" is not metaphor but refers probably to the innumerable cases of destruction by fire at this time, a fire which may have been from fierce earthquakes, volcanism, and exoterrestrial sources, which desolated many peoples and sent them out as marauders and colonists. Or so it is argued in a number of places, and it is precisely this kind of general ecological destruction encountered in VIII. and VII. century history that helped to confuse the dates by seeming to cause "Dark Ages" of barbarism, depopulation and continual movement and strife of peoples. Hence, the second point about the background of Rome is that the town originated in a turbulent period when the war planet Mars, Homer's "bloodstained stormer of walls," became a top god in Troy and not by coincidence in Rome.

The latest consensus may be expressed in the words of F. Castagnoli:⁴

Archaeological excavations have opened up new prospects: the considerable documentation of evidence of the Late Bronze Age (particularly in the zone involved directly with the legend such as Ardea and Lavinium) and the Mycenaean imports in Southern Etruria, and between Reatino and southern Umbria, has reinvoled the thesis (for some time cast aside) of a true historical reality adumbrated in the legend; joined to this suggestion is the hypothesis that various manufactures of the oldest Latium civilization reflect Cretan models and finally the theory that the Latin language reveals Mycenaean traces. In consequence, the coming of Aeneas to Latium may not be an artificially created myth, but instead, in a certain sense, a tradition, that is, the echo of real occurrences, the arrival of Aegeans in Latium during the period of the Trojan War.

This certainly does not go far enough to suit our views, but will do for a start.

At the magnificent bimillennial exposition honoring Virgil in the beautiful setting of the Campidoglio in Rome in 1981, the heroine was the famous sculpture of the she-wolf of Rome, suckling Romulus and Remus. A small boy listened while his father explained: "She nursed the orphans, and Romulus then founded Rome." The wolf was fashioned alone in ancient times, possibly by an Etruscan master, and the twins were added only several centuries ago. The wolf of Rome and the Mars-Ares of Aeneas' may not have been far apart.

Already in antiquity and possibly based upon the word of Herodotus alone, the Trojan wars had been placed in remote antiquity, the XII. and XIII. centuries. When the Romans came to deal with this date, they found that their tradition of Romulus as founder of the city proper in the VIII. century (753, 747, etc) was impossibly disconnected with the Trojans, who now seemed to have disappeared four centuries earlier. Thereupon at the end of the III. century B. C., Q. Fabius Pictor, a Roman writing in Greek, first (to our knowledge) bridged the gap by inserting an Alban line of Kings: but a more recent quotation from him (see below) seems to contradict this reputed view. In

² "Dating the Aegean Bronze Age without Radiocarbon," 20 *Archaeometry* (1978) 212.

³ W. F. Edgerton and J. A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1936), 53; While J. H. Breasted (*Ancient Records of Egypt* (1906), IV, 37-8) translates "They came with fire prepared before them, forward to Egypt."

⁴ In *Enea nel Lazio: Archaeologia e Mito* (Milano: Fratelli Palombi; 1981), 5.

contrast, Ennius and others connected Aeneas and Romulus directly, as grandfather and grandson.

F. Castagnoli tells us how skepticism discounted the tradition:

The Trojan origin of the Latins was already put in doubt in the seventeenth century by the humanist Philipp Cluever, a rigorous critique of philological aspects begun in the middle of the Eighteenth Century (Niebuhr, Klausen, Schwegler, etc.); principally upon their work has been based the interpretation of legendary material accorded by most historians of ancient Rome.

It is understandable that since the Romans had not been able to stabilize the history of their origins, the legendary part would fall prey to the new scientists who were bent upon sharpening their tools against superstition.

Later on the strong interest of the Etruscans in Aeneas was exposed. Also presented was the theory that Greek writers had created the legend. But then, after Mycenaean connections had been liberally displayed in the archaeology of Italy, the notion of archaic elements corresponding to the myth grew up. More recently Latium has come under exploration, including especially Lavinium.

In the *Iliad* (302-8), the god Poseidon saves Aeneas from being killed by Achilles so as to preserve the house of Dardanus, beloved of Zeus, whose head will be Aeneas and also Aeneas will be king of Troy with many generations to follow. Hera adds that Troy must be substituted. So went the logic behind the legend.

But of course there was more than nonsense in the *Iliad*. In the years when Virgil was writing the *Aeneid*, Properzio publicized him, announcing that he would revive the armed exploits of the Trojan Aeneas and the wall built upon the Lavinian strand. "Take yourselves back, Roman and Greek writers! There stands hidden something greater than the *Iliad*."

In the middle of the VIII. century, Ilioupersis of Arctinus and Miletus spoke of the secret flight of Aeneas from Troy up Mount Ida. Later the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite promises Aeneas a kingdom with a glorious future, a Troy restored. In the VI. century a coin of the city Aineia on the Chalcidean peninsula displays Aeneas in flight from Troy, whence to found this same settlement.

That Aeneas went west appears for the first time in the fragmentary record in a table of the Capitoline Museum illustrating the work of Stesichorus of the VII. century. In one scene Aeneas leaves through a Trojan gate; in another, Aeneas, with his father, Anchises, son Ascanius, and companion Misenus board a ship *eis ten Hesperian*, "toward the west." Anchises carries the sacred idols.

A direct connection of Aeneas with Latium appears a century later, at the end of the V. century, with two Greek historians, Ellanicus of Lesbos and Damaster of Sigens. The story also appears of the burning of the Trojans' ship by their womenfolk, and of the naming of Rome after the Trojan heroine Rome, ringleader presumably in the affair.

The story told by Greeks (and no Roman history in Latin is known until much later) is seen in Italian perspective about 300 B. C. when the historian Timaeus of Tauromenium attests to sacred Trojan relics preserved in a sanctuary of Lavinium. Several decades later, the poet Licofronius, depending upon Timaeus, confirms him and details on the existence of the legendary Lavinium.

About the same time, Q. Fabius Pictor was writing his history. A recently discovered and fragmented inscription says only this about him:

He enquired into the arrival of Hercules in Italy and (?) the alliance of Aeneas and Latinus ... Not (?) much later Romulus and Remus were born⁵.

Thus contrary to his reputed view, Pictor (or Pictorinus as the inscription has it) carries Aeneas in the VIII. century. The mention of Hercules is not queer. In *The Disastrous Love Affair of Moon and Mars*, I review the legendary ties between the good-man figure Hercules and the god Ares-Mars,

⁵ R. M. Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans*, New York: Humanities Press, 1976, 16.

and place the sons of Hercules, the Heraclids, as the invaders of Greece in the VIII. century, at Pylos, for example, where they fight against the Pylian kinsmen of the young Nestor, later famous as an old warrior of the Trojan War. Another case implicating Hercules-Mars and the Heraclids reminds us of the Roman case. It is introduced by Desborough in his book on the *The Greek Dark Ages*⁶.

Temenos was one of the three Heraclid leaders who with the Dorians seized the Peloponnese, according to the conventional Greek chronology at the end of the twelfth century. He had a grandson called Rhegnidas, who gained control of the little town of Philius; this would be not much later than the middle of the eleventh century. This event, as we are told by Pausanias, resulted in the departure to Samos of the leader of the opposition party in Philius, Hyppasos; and Hyppasos was the great-grandfather of "the famous sage Pythagoras." Pythagoras should then have been living at the end of the tenth century, and so one might think, one has an admirable Dark Age situation : until, that is to say, one discovers that Pythagoras belonged to the middle of the sixth century, a difference of no fewer than three hundred and fifty years.

The Heraclids are evidently of the eighth century. In the superior guidebook to the Bimillenario Virgiliano at the Campidoglio in Rome, 22 September to 31 December 1981, we find the major leads needed to connect *Enea nel Lazio* to the larger Mediterranean framework of time and events.

Hundreds of archaeological discoveries are displayed and all of the sites excavated until now are described. The distinguished editors and authors do not speak of a "Dark Ages" in Latium or Italy. They act nevertheless as if they existed. Therefore we find that when all the artifacts can be grouped by centuries they concentrate into two groups , the first from the XI to XIII century B. C. and the second from the VIII century to the end of the Republic.

The archaeological record of contacts between the Aegean world and Tyrrhenian Central Italy are few and difficult to interpret. Presently one treats with seven fragments of pottery and five fragments of bronze coming from the areas of Luni sul Mignon, San Giovenale, Monte Rovello, and Prediluco-Contigliano, none of them coastal... It is almost impossible to assign them precise form and the decoration is too generic to permit all but the broadest dating⁷.

Not only is there an absence of imported articles over the centuries between the supposed time of Aeneas and the time of the founding of Rome, but indigenous discoveries of the period are also rare (and, we argue, perforce non-existent). Hundreds of dates and artifacts mark the Bimillennial Exposition. Perhaps only a dozen are slipped into the period between the XI. and VIII. centuries. The earlier objects and dates are of Italian provenance; the later ones are heavily Greek.

The earlier period carries Central Italy into late Bronze and the beginnings of the Iron Age. The cultural uniformity of southern Etruria and Latium is called total already at this XI. century boundary. Iron tools of Aeneas are attested to. And then, following the "Dark Ages", there occurs an outburst of production and trade.

The king and cities of Virgil become then historical realities only when figured in the early Bronze Age: it is on the other hand certain that their origins need be sought in that crucial period, the Late Bronze age⁸

The arrival of "Aegean" people in the XIII. Century, writes one authority, Renato Peroni, should have inaugurated a process of elements deriving from various fields of human activity, beginning with the material culture.

⁶ London: Benn, 1972; Malcolm Lowery provides this instance in *I Soc. Interdiscip. Stud.* 1 (Jan. 1976) 16. I cite another in *The Disastrous Love Affair of Moon and Mars*, "Crazed Heroes of Dark Ages."

⁷ *Enea nel Lazio*, 107.

⁸ Alessandro Guidi, in *Enea Nel Lazio*, 94.

Yet of all this, in the archaeological sources related to the period of Latium that interests us, there is not the slightest trace. It is hard to imagine a cultural continuity, in ceramics for instance, greater than that which is presented during these centuries⁹

Peroni, after expressing grave doubt that one could have an invasion and occupation without cultural impact, though that is what archaeology seems to reveal, repeats that in the XIII. to XI. centuries (and significantly for our argument he terms the XI. "less developed") "the cultural uniformity of southern Etruria and old Latium appears to be total."

What else can he say, so long as he believes the long chronology inherited from the Egyptologists: "The literary sources and archaeological evidence permit us to assign the destruction of Homeric Troy to the XII. century. The Latium of the 'saga' of Aeneas is therefore of the period contained between the Middle Age of Bronze (XVI-XIV Century B. C.) and the first phase of Latin civilization (X. Century)"¹⁰.

He goes on to survey the town sites occupied in the late Bronze Age, and finds a continuity of occupation going into the age of iron, such as Ardea, Ficana, Pratica di Mare, and Acqua Acetosa Laurentina. This in itself is remarkable, considering the lapsed centuries and the absence of cultural remains of the long period of time.

Also remarkable is the evidence that between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age the number of inhabited places of Etruria dropped by four fifths¹¹! At the same time, the underpopulated regions of Latium and Sabina held their own and increased slightly their settlements.

"So rapid a process of depopulation (in some cases occurring violently, in others voluntarily abandoned) and the incorporation of the population in a few proto-urban centers will make way, in its turn, to the mechanisms of formation of a complex society, even of a 'stratal' type, at the beginnings of the Etruscan nation." Meanwhile, the Latins were beginning to accrete settlements.

This scenario of Peroni suits exactly our theory of a period of natural catastrophes and survivors occurring in the VIII. century. One age disappears into another without evidence of transition. As in Greece the culture reverts to survivorship; strife is rampant. The Trojans arrive amidst a general desolation and disorganization, gain a foothold without difficulty, even welcomed in a way, and begin to expand and to found new towns, among them Rome.

In Southern Italy and Sicily a similar set of events is occurring. The scholar's "Dark Ages" myth prevails. After the mid-XIII. Century, writes L. B. Brea, "a real Dark Age set in only to be brought to an end five centuries later with the Greek colonization of Sicily and Southern Italy." Before it set in, there had been much trade with the Mycenaean century and a flourishing civilization. However, we find that the city of Gela was established by a warrior from Troy in 690 B. C. We also note that at Agrigento and Segesta artwork in Mycenaean style was practiced at both of the interfaces of the Dark Ages. Further, dome-shaped Mycenaean *tholos* tombs were closely alike across the imagined 500-year gap. And that at Morgantina excavators found a Greek fort constructed just above and on top of a destroyed Mycenaean level.

Virgil has Aeneas landing in Latium, at the mouth of the Numicus river (Sol Indiges, Troia and by today's name Fosso di Pratica). The hero, desperate to feed his men, chases an animal for distance of all 24 stadi (4440 meters) and comes upon a herd of pigs on a hill. He sacrifices them there and founds the town of Lavinium. The names and distances between the two given by Virgil are exact today¹². Titus Livius remarks on the name, Troy, given to the place of landing. The Trojan altars were said to be still there at the end of the pagan era, by Pliny the Elder and Dionysius of

⁹*Enea nel Lazio*. 87.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 88.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 92.

¹²*Ibid.*, 157.

Halicarnassus, the historian.

At Lavinium, named for Aeneas' wife, Dionysius visited in the I. century B. C. There he witnessed relics supposedly of Aeneas held in a sanctuary and tomb dedicated to the Trojan hero¹³. The preservation of the relics and the identification of the tomb might well have been impossible if they have originated in the XII century; it is more plausible that they had lasted from the VII. or at least until the time of Timaeus of Tauromenum about 300 B. C., who saw them. Recently, the "tomb of Aeneas" has been uncovered and placed in the VII. century, with remodeling into a shrine occurring in the IV. century¹⁴.

Dionysius describes a round temple at Lavinium that housed the idols of the Trojans, which seems to have been emulated in the round temple of Vesta and the Penati of the Roman Forum. The small Lavinium temple is replicated on a coin of the Emperor Antoninus Pius.

Aeneas probably rested in several places on his way to Latium, in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Crete, Carthage, and Sicily. Apollo's oracle at Delos told him to seek the land of his ancestors and this was taken by his father, Anchises, to mean Crete. The refugees did go there, finding a desolate and abandoned settlement. They began to settle down but were beset (significantly) by a natural disaster that made further consultation with Apollo necessary. Luckily, a second trip to Delos was not required because voices authorized by Apollo urged them to find the true place of their origins, and they set sail for the West¹⁵. Anchises could not remember Italy, hence had not been born there, but recalled that certain ancestors had come from there, Dardanus and Iasius, and had been Olustrians or Italians.

On the way to Italy, they stop at Carthage, which is, says Virgil, still under construction by Queen Dido, who has fled with her supporters from a berserk brother who ruled Phoenicia. Here we encounter a chronological problem; to be sure it is not a matter of centuries but of a generation. Dido is best placed at -804 or -803, before the dates which we accept for the Trojan War (s), which may have occurred over most of a century, at which time Aeneas would most likely have left Troy. Moreover, the dates assigned traditionally to Romulus, a grandson of Aeneas, are -772 (-771) to -717, and to the founding of Rome -747 or thereabout.

Either Aeneas left upon an earlier sack of the city, or someone related to Aeneas and therefore confused with him visited Dido. The stop itself was not unexpected. There appears to be a non-Greek connection that binds in alliance the Trojans and their Thracian and Anatolian friends, the Carthaginians, and the Etruscans. Etruria, said Herodotus, was settled by Anatolian Lydians before the Trojan War¹⁶.

But who might have visited Carthage and could be mistaken for Aeneas? Philistos and Appios clearly give 50 years before the Trojan War as the date when Carthage was founded. Timaeus gives -814 and Josephus independently gives -826. Yet Carthage's earliest archaeological remains afford specimens of Greek material ascribed to the last quarter of the VIII. century, presumably -725 to -700.

Were the Phoenician and Trojan refugees in motion a century apart? Not according to Virgil, obviously, who describes a torrid love affair between Aeneas and Dido. And not according to the traditional dates for Romulus and the founding of Rome; if Aeneas abandoned Dido at the turn of the century, he could have grandfathered Romulus at the appropriate moment, about -772. Arie Dirkswager, in an unpublished manuscript lent the author, offers a solution. He suggest that the king of Tros who founded Troy then moved to Italy where he founded Etruria and gave the Etruscans his name, about -815. It was he who knew Dido! Then later, the refugee party led by

¹³ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁴ P. Somella, *Rediconti 44: Atti di Pontificio accademia di Archeologia* (1971-2), 47-74; *Enea nel Lazio*, 157-8, 172-7.

¹⁵ *Aeneid*, III, 94-6 (Humphries trans.) pp. 64, 66.

¹⁶ *Histories* I, 94, (80-1 in the Penguin ed., 1954).

Aeneas would join its kinsmen about 747 B. C., when Troy burned.

However, although we also view the Etruscans and Trojans as related, we see a later date for the Trojan wars finally to end, and one has to place Romulus and the founding of Rome into the very end of the VII. century.

We are perplexed now and have exhausted our meager supply of information. The most plausible suggestion I can afford is that the Trojan Wars were several until the city's final destruction (and we cannot confirm the site of Hisarlik - Schliemann's discovery - as more than a frontier post in the struggles). Given the practices of those times, an age of colonization and restless wanderings having begun, Aeneas, Prince of Troy, led his party of refugees out at an early stage of the wars (which Homer combined into one for literary effect and from amnesiac causes), did visit Dido at the turn of the century, and so history picks up with Romulus and the founding of Rome in the middle of the next century. We are introducing one doubt in order to relieve ourselves of several. And we should be grateful if some brilliant scholar carried down the whole scenario by another century to place it squarely in the catastrophic VIII. and VII. centuries.

We have relieved ourselves of several notions: that Virgil was only glorifying Rome by mythmaking; that the "Dark Ages" existed in Italy between -1200 and -700; that Aeneas and Troy were of the XII. century; that Aeneas and Romulus were fictional characters; that there was no significance to Mars and the Wolf of Rome; that the Etruscans were long settled in Italy and were a natural and continual foe of the new Latins; that the Romans were a simple farm folk who took well to fighting; and that in the VIII. century natural conditions were normal.

We understand better why the exasperating gap between Aeneas and Romulus was created: the need to integrate chronology of diverse cultures by basing it upon what was believed to be the nearly perfect chronology, the Egyptian; the scholarly skepticism of all legend until recently, especially when wolves and feral infants are tied to the mythical package, not to mention the hallucinogenic pantheon; the seeming circular confirmation of Etruscan-Greek-Roman interrelations; the ignorance and neglect of great natural disasters, such as Aeneas encountered in Crete; alternative explanations of the Dark Ages such as long-drawn-out climatic changes, restless northern tribesmen, and normal decay of civilizations; the injection of artifacts and personages falsely into the gap of time; and the vanity of Roman noble families who had attached themselves genetically to the fictitious personae of the noble line of Alba Longa extending back to Lavinium, including even the Caesars.

We surmise, by way of contrast, that Aeneas was a Trojan noble, active around -800. He left a beleaguered Troy in an early stage of successive sieges, founded settlements in several places, eventually in Latium, near Etruscan relatives, and among a disastrously weakened native population.

A prompt acculturation and cultural homogenizing began, catalyzed by the disorganizing effects of a turbulent nature. His daughter Elia mothered Romulus (and one fantasizes that his godmother was Roma who led the female party which burned the Trojan ships to prevent further wanderings). The heavens were producing some of the disasters, and the planet Mars was connected with them to the point that the god could be the godfather to Romulus who eventually joined him in a cyclonic episode. The wolf of Rome was the symbol of Mars. The experience of Italy was being replicated throughout the world in those times; many peoples were practically destroyed; many new towns were founded. The Mycenaean civilization was wrecked, so too the Cretan, so too many another including the Sicilian of Italy and Sicily. The Bronze Age lurches abruptly into the Iron age.