

QAD Latin Factoids

I. Social structure:

- Patricians – privileged class, included senators, landowners; basically ran everything
- Plebeians – Roman citizens who were not patricians; in early republic were excluded from Senate and could not hold office
- Equites – literally horsemen, but actually business / capitalist class

II. Government

- Assemblies
 - Comitia curiata – basis of political and military organization
 - Comitia centuriata – used to be a military assembly
 - Comitia tributa – elected lesser magistrates
 - Concilium plebis – may have elected tribunes and aediles
- Optimates and populares
 - Optimates – conservative part of Senate
 - Populares – reformers (like the Gracchi brothers)
- Cursus honorum – path followed by magistrates, roughly a systematic route to lead one to position of great power within the republic. Previous military service or service in the courts was expected.
- Curule Magistrates *Note that over time some of the responsibilities shifted so this is a very general recap and not necessarily even a snapshot in time*
 - Quaestors – elected for 1 year by comitia tributa
 - financial and administrative officials
 - maintained public records
 - financial secretaries
 - paymasters for military campaigns
 - Aediles – elected for 1 year by comitia tributa
 - maintenance and repair of public buildings
 - markets
 - public games and festivals
 - *Not an essential office in the cursus honorum*
 - Praetors – elected for 1 year by comitia centuriata *Note: this position derived from the military command*
 - originally, in 509 B.C. with abolition of monarchy, became quasi king
 - supreme civil judge
 - issued annual edicts
 - under Roman empire, took over function of public games
 - usually were around 40 years of age
 - Consuls – elected by the comitia centuriata but proposed by the Senate
 - minimum age was 36, increased to 42 in 1st century B.C.
 - assumed many of the duties of king when monarchy abolished though originally that function went to praetor (see above)
 - because system was collegial, did not have supreme power but had to share power
 - elected primarily as commanders of military forces
 - presided over Senate and implemented decisions

- Plebeian tribunes
 - Censors – elected every 5 years by comitia centuriata to hold office for 18 months
 - took census of property
 - kept register of all property
 - supervised leasing of lands
 - handled government contracts
 - controlled public morals
 - Dictator – appointed by consul, proposed by Senate, for maximum of 6 months
 - all other magistrates remained in place
 - appointed magister equitum (master of the horse) as his assistant
 - position abolished in 44 B.C. with death of Julius Caesar (any wonder why?)

III. A little geography – not extensive, just a few details

- Rome
 - was founded on seven hills: Capitoline, Palatine, (the Roman Forum lies between these two hills), Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal and Quirinal
 - originally bounded by the Servian Wall (4th century B.C.)
 - later, in imperial times, as area increased, to the Aurelian Wall with the Western boundary the River Tiber
- Rubicon - “stream” on the border of Italy and Cisalpine Gaul; when Julius Caesar, as a military leader, crossed it, in 49 B.C., it began a civil war
- Pyrenees – mountains separating Spain from France (Gaul)
- Carthage – northern Africa
- Apennines – mountains stretching from the north to the south of Italy
- Sardinia and Corsica lie in the western Mediterranean off the western coast of Italy, Sicily is to the southwest
- Cyprus lies in the southeast Mediterranean
- Memphis and Alexandria were both key ports in Egypt (and they are still beautiful cities)
- Illyricum – Dalmatian coast (lies parallel to the eastern coast of Italy) was a base for pirates before it was made a Roman province
- Gaul – bounded by the Alps, Pyrenees, the Rhine River and the Atlantic
- Germania – area originally east of the Rhine and north of the Danube River
- Bithynia and Pontus – provinces to the south of the Black Sea
- Macedonia – area including modern Greece, Balkans

IV. A little literature – a very brief pass through. Since AP exams in Latin focus on Ovid, Catullus, Vergil and Horace these may be key ones to recognize

- Some Greeks
 - Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles were the big three tragedians
 - Aristophanes was the major comedian
 - Homer – wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey
- For a quick overview of some of the major works of Roman authors, go to [thelatinlibrary](#) link below. I have tried to separate them by general types of writing, but the boundaries are not clear-cut
 - Satirists

- Juvenal (I personally think he was rather bitter and humorless and prone to excesses of negative hyperbole)
- Martial – wrote nice little slices of life in his Epigrammata or Epigrammes
- Petronius – wrote the Satyricon
- Historians
 - Livy – ab urbe condita libri
 - Eutropius - 4th century A.D. chronicler
 - Tacitus
- Poets
 - Vergil (Publius Vergilius Maro) – aside from Aeneid (you should know there are 12 books), wrote Eclogues and Georgics
 - Catullus (Gaius Valerius Catullus) – how many of his poems were dedicated to the lovely Lesbia?
 - Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) – Sermones (e.g., Country Mouse and City Mouse), Epodes, Ars Poetica
 - Ovid (P. Ovidius Naso) – Metamorphoses, Ars Amatoria (for which he was expelled by Augustus), Fasti (his 'calendar' work – arranged sequentially by days, but never completed because he was exiled)
- Leaders on leadership
 - Iulius Caesar – Bello Gallico is his Gallic War masterpiece
 - Augustus – Res Gestae
- Dramatists
 - Plautus
 - Terence
- Others of note
 - Vitruvius – father of architecture
 - Cicero – great orator and philosopher, spoke against Catiline on the Senate floor
 - Pliny the Elder – wrote Natural History, was also an admiral, died on his way to check out eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

V. A few literary terms (ref: Hall and McKay, Selections from Vergil's Aeneid Books I, IV, VI, Longman, 1988, p. 7) *Note: some you know so well from English, like simile and metaphor as well as a few I've listed here anyway*

- alliteration – repetition of the same initial sound
- anaphora – repetition of the same word at the beginning of two successive clauses
- anastrophe – changing the usual order of words
- assonance – close recurrence of similar vowel sounds
- asyndeton – omission of conjunction in series of words
- chiasmus – from Greek 'crossing', arrangement of pairs of words in opposite order: oculis nigris longis digitis
- litotes – affirmative expressed by stating its opposite – think about the Catullus poem we read when we were studying about beauty; it's a perfect example
- onomatopoeia – imitation of a word by its sound
- synecdoche – use of a part to represent a whole

VI. Key people and events with dates as reference points

- 1184 B.C. ? Aeneas journey to Latium

- 753 B.C. - Rome founded by Romulus, who became the first king
- between 753 and 509 B.C., Rome was ruled by seven kings, the last of which, Tarquinius Superbus, was expelled from Rome. Rome then became a republic.
- 264 B.C. - beginning of the first Punic War (against Carthage)
- 201 B.C. - end of the Second Punic War. Early on (217 B.C.), Hannibal had successes against the Romans, but eventually suffered defeat
- In the 135-120 B.C. timeframe, the Gracchi brothers attempted to pass agrarian reforms to help the poorer people; they were later put to death
- 112-105 B.C. - wars against Jugurtha in North Africa; Marius fought against him
- 100 B.C. - birth of Julius Caesar
- 60 B.C. - formation of the First Triumvirate: Crassus, Pompey, Julius Caesar *Note that any 'affection' for Pompey by Julius Caesar waned after Julius Caesar's daughter, wife of Pompey, died*
- 47 - 44 B.C. - Julius Caesar's dictatorship, which ended abruptly with his assassination
- 43 B.C. - formation of the Second Triumvirate: Lepidus, Marc Antony, Octavian
- 40 B.C. - Antony married Octavian's sister.
- 33 B.C. - 2nd triumvirate ended; tensions existed among its members
- 31 B.C. - Battle of Actium => Octavian gained control of Roman world, the next year Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt where they committed suicide
- 27 B.C. - Beginning of the Imperial period with Octavian assuming the title Augustus; ended his rule in 14 A.D.
- Succeeding emperors:
 - Tiberius 14 – 37
 - Caligula 37 – 41: elected his horse to the Senate
 - Claudius 41 – 54
 - Nero 54 – 68: great fire, construction of the Domus Aurea
 - Galba 68 – 69, Otho 69, Vitellius 69
 - Vespasian 69 – 79: during his reign Flavian Amphitheatre (Colosseum) begun
 - Titus 79 – 81
 - Domitian 81 – 96
 - Nerva 96 – 98
 - Trajan 98 – 117: during his reign huge marketplace constructed – Trajan's markets
 - Hadrian 117 – 138: his mausoleum, also called Castel Sant'Angelo, built on the other side of the Tiber River
- Great bath complexes of Caracalla (211 – 217) and Diocletian (284 – 305)

VII. A few random thoughts

- The Romans are indebted to the Greeks for literary traditions, their gods and goddesses, many other things, but
- they did invent concrete and
- the Pantheon, to all the gods, was the largest, most perfect example of a dome
- a basilica is not, as commonly thought, a church but a large public meeting hall
- a necropolis is a burial “city” located outside the entrance to a main city

The references I used above were:

Adkins, L and Adkins, R, Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome, Oxford University Press, 1994

Hall and McKay, Selections from Vergil's Aeneid Books I, IV, VI, Longman, 1988

You may also want to check out the following links:

thelatinlibrary.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Classical_Civilisation