

History

Theme II: Founders, Beliefs and Citizenship in the Mediterranean during the Millennium Before Christ

Chapter 5: Rome – Myth and History

The Romans invented **myths** to explain the foundation of their capital city, Rome. These myths gave Rome a divine origin and linked their history into **Greek mythology**. These myths were first transmitted orally then from the end of the **Republic** written down by poets such as Virgil. According to them, Rome was founded in 753 BC.

Archaeological evidence confirms the existence of several villages on the hills of Rome during the 8th century BC. These villages later grouped together in the 6th century BC and built a surrounding wall.

Originally Rome was a **monarchy** but in 509 BC a revolt overthrew the last king and Rome became a republic. Power was shared by the citizens and people elected magistrates to represent them. This was an **oligarchy** because only the richest people could become magistrates

Under the Republic, Rome became the capital of a huge empire. When **Julius Caesar**, victor of the war with the Gauls, was nominated dictator for life in 44BC, a group of senators assassinated him because they feared the return of monarchy. By 27 BC, when **Augustus** ended the Republic, the Roman Empire extended throughout the whole Mediterranean and the Romans used myths to justify their rule.

The origin of Roman civilisation is in the **city of Rome**.

It was founded in the eighth century BC on the banks of the River Tiber, in the Italian Peninsula, in an area of easy protection, as it was surrounded by **seven hills**.

