

THE FOUNDING OF ROME

Around 3,000 years ago, a tribe of people known as the Latins settled on the hilltops above the banks of the Tiber, in the land that is now Italy. This cluster of small villages eventually grew to become the city of Rome - one of the most splendid cities in the ancient world and the capital of the mighty Roman empire.

LAND OF THE LATINIS

The Latins lived on a fertile plain on the west coast of Italy. They spoke an earlier form of the language which is now known as Latin, and the area of Italy where they lived became known as Latium. The Latins grew crops and kept animals, and around 1,000BC they began building the first small hilltop villages on the future site of the great city of Rome.

The site had lots of natural advantages. At just that spot the Tiber narrowed, and there was an island in the middle, making it possible for people to cross the river. The coast was 25km (about 15 miles) away - close enough to reach the sea by boat, but far enough away to be safe from the pirates who roamed the Mediterranean. And from the hills above the river, it was easy to spot enemies coming and fight them off.

Here, you can see an early Latin settlement on the Palatine Hill, one of the seven hills which later became the site of Rome.

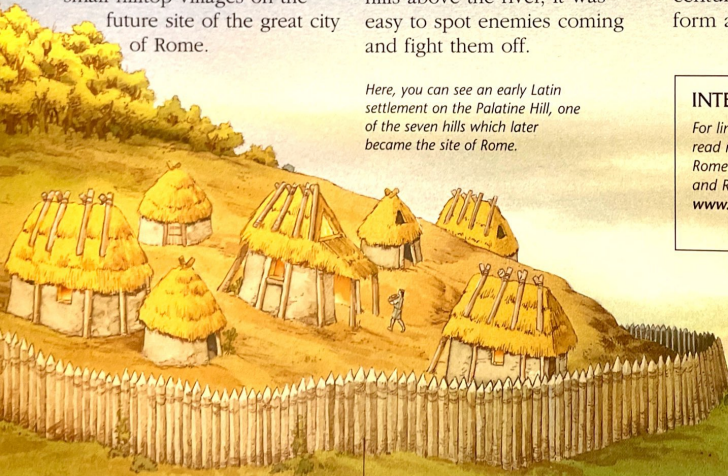


Urns like this, in the shape of a house, were used by the Latins for burying the ashes of their dead.

The Latins lived in simple, wooden huts with thatched roofs. They built their homes on the hilltops above the Tiber and used the marshy valleys below as cemeteries for burying their dead. Gradually, these small villages spread down the hillsides and, some time during the 8th century BC, they merged to form a single town - Rome.

INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can read more about the founding of Rome and the legend of Romulus and Remus, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com



A wooden fence helped to protect the village from enemies.

The marshy valley below the Palatine Hill became a meeting place for people from the surrounding villages.