The foundation of Rome and the Royal age: 753–509 B.C.

Legend has it that Rome was founded by Romulus, brother of Remus, on 21 April 753 B.C. From that date until 509 B.C., seven kings are traditionally said to have reigned. However, archaeological excavations date the remains of the first settlement of Rome on the Palatine Hill, the original nucleus of the Urbs, at the 19th century B.C. Around 575 B.C., two marshy areas by the Tiber were located for the construction of the Roman Forum and the Cattle Market. Rome began to expand into Latium, destroying the city of Alba Longa. The colony of Ostia was founded at the mouth of the Tiber. Under Tarquinius Priscus, Etruscan domination of Rome and expansion towards Campania began. The society was divided between patricians and plebeians.

Foundation of Rome (753 B.C.)
Reign of Romulus (753–717 B.C.)
Reign of Numa Pompilius (717–673 B.C.)
Reign of Tullus Hostilius (673–637 B.C.)
Reign of Ancus Martius (637–615 B.C.)
Reign of Tarquinius Priscus (615–573 B.C.)
Reign of Servius Tullius (573–536 B.C.)
Reign of Tarquin the Proud (536–509 B.C.)

The Republic and the patrician-plebian conflict: 509–343 B.C.

After the expulsion of the Etruscans from Rome and the election of the first consuls, Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquilinus Collatinus, the Roman Republic was introduced. A long period of serious social strife between patricians and plebeians began. In 463 B.C., Rome joined the Latin League. In 454 B.C., the Tribunes of the Plebs were elected and the comitia tributa instituted to defend the rights of the less wealthy classes. The organization of the army into "centuriae" dates from 451 B.C. In the same year, the first decemvirs were elected, and the laws of the Twelve Tables were enacted. The capital city of Veii was destroyed in 396 B.C. Rome was plundered by the Gauls in 390 B.C., but soon recovered and continued to pursue its expansionist policy. In 357 B.C., the plebs obtained the right to appoint their own consuls and, within a few years, gained admission to the main magistracies.

Roman victory against the Latins at Lake Regillus (496 B.C.)
Creation of the Tribunes of the Plebs (494 B.C.)
Enactment of the laws of the Twelve Tables (451 B.C.)
Marriage between patricians and plebeians allowed (445 B.C.)
Destruction of Veii (396 B.C.)
The Gauls burn Rome (390 B.C.)
Plebeians allowed to hold consul office (367 B.C.)

The conquest of Italy and the Punies Wars: 343–186 B.C.

Between 343 and 341 B.C., the Romans fought their first war against the Samnites, whose rule extended over south Italy. In 338 B.C., the dissolution of the Latin League was imposed by Rome. During the Second Samnite War, the Romans were defeated at the Caudine Forks, but the third and decisive war concluded in 290 B.C. with the victory of Rome. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, summoned to Italy by Tarentum in 200 B.C., was defeated five years later at Beneventum. Rome, now expanding rapidly, clashed with Carthage at the end of the Second Punic War in 201 B.C., Rome controlled the Mediterranean. In 146 B.C., Carthage was razed to the ground. Rome annexed Greece and Macedonia.

Samnian Wars (243–220 B.C.)
Victory over Pyrrhus (229 B.C.)
The 1st Punic War (264–241 B.C.)
The Romans occupy Sardinia and Corsica (238 B.C.)
The Romans occupy Cisalpine Gaul (223 B.C.)
The 2nd Punic War (218–201 B.C.)
The Romans institute the Hispanic provinces (197 B.C.)
The 3rd Punic War and the destruction of Carthage (149–146 B.C.)
The destruction of Corinth; Macedonia and Greece become Roman (146 B.C.)
The Galls burn Rome (390 B.C.)
Plebeians allowed to hold consul office (367 B.C.)

The crisis facing the Republic: 146–78 B.C.

The province of Asia was instituted in 133 B.C. The republic was raised by civil conflict. The tribune Tiberius Gracchus challenged the authority of the Senate and endeavored to introduce some agricultural reforms, but was assassinated. The Second Mithridatic War (87–70 B.C.) marked the beginning of the civil wars against Mithridates VI of Pontus.

Sulla wins the 1st Mithridatic War (87–85 B.C.)
Sulla becomes dictator (82 B.C.)
Sulla dies at Pompeii (78 B.C.)
The age of Caesar and the end of the Republic: 78–44 B.C.

Rome underwent a period of great social upheaval, while the senatorial oligarchy was increasingly weakened. Pompey, elected consul in 70 B.C., conquered Parthia, Egypt, and the East. In 63 B.C., Cicero foiled Catiline's conspiracy. Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus set up the First Triumvirate, a coalition against the power of the Senate, in 60 B.C. Between 50–51 B.C., Caesar conquered Gaul. The death of Crassus in 53 B.C., Pompey became sole consul, with the support of the senatorial party. In 49 B.C., the Senate ordered Caesar to dissolve the legions, but he crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome, thus initiating the Civil War. Pompey was defeated at Pharsalus in 48 B.C., where he was killed. In 45 B.C., Caesar finally defeated Pompey's supporters at Pharsalus and marched to Egypt, where he was killed. In 40 B.C., the Senate abolished the censorship and the dictator, establishment of the absolute authority of the Senate.

Assassination of Tiberius Gracchus (133 B.C.)
Assassination of Caius Gracchus (121 B.C.)
War against Jugurtha (112–105 B.C.)
Marius defeats the Teutons and Cimbrians (102–101 B.C.)
Allies' War (91–88 B.C.)
Death of Caius Marius (86 B.C.)
Sulla wins the 1st Mithridatic War (87–85 B.C.)
Sulla becomes dictator (82 B.C.)
Sulla dies at Pompeii (78 B.C.)
The end of the Republic: 78–44 B.C.
Augustus and the Julio-Claudian dynasty: 44 B.C.—A.D. 68

With the battle of Actium, fought between the armies of Octavian and those of Antony and Cleopatra, the battle for the succession to Caesar ended and the Imperial age began. Octavian, who received the title of Augustus from the Senate in 27 B.C., totally reorganized the political structures of the State and concentrated all the major powers in his own hands; he limited the role of the Senate, reorganized the provinces, strengthened the borders and boosted the economy. On his death in A.D. 14 he was succeeded by Tiberius, a good administrator and skilled diplomat. After the insane reign of Caligula, Claudius undertook the bureaucratic and financial reform of the State and the Romanization of the provinces. His successor, Nero, is infamous for his excesses and the burning of Rome.

Second Triumvirate (43 B.C.)
Battle of Actium (31 B.C.)

Octavian receives the title of Augustus (27 B.C.)

Death of Augustus (A.D. 14)
Reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37)
Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (A.D. 33)
Reign of Caligula (A.D. 37–41)
Reign of Claudius (A.D. 41–54)
Reign of Nero (A.D. 54–68)

The Flavian dynasty and the adopted emperors: A.D. 68–192

On the death of Nero a period of military anarchy began, during which the Emperors Galba, Otho and Vitellius reigned in succession. After Vespasian seized power, he conquered Judaea and reorganized the administration of the State. After the brief reign of Titus Domitian consolidated the Roman conquests in Britannia and Germany. By adopting Trajan, Nerva initiated the series of adopted emperors. Trajan’s victorious military campaigns brought the Empire to the peak of its expansion. Hadrian renounced the expansionist policy of his predecessor and built Hadrian’s Wall in Britannia. The reign of Antoninus Pius coincided with a long period of peace, while Marcus Aurelius had to put down a number of revolts in Africa, Spain and Britannia. With the accession of Commodus, a serious political crisis began.

Reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69–79)
Reign of Titus (A.D. 79–81)
Eruption of Vesuvius (A.D. 79)

The Severan dynasty and the period of anarchy: A.D. 193–284

After the short-lived reign of Pertinax, Septimius Severus became emperor with the support of his legions. He reorganized the provinces to government office, but this reform and the increase in military expenditure created discontent and weakened the economy. On his death, his despotism, blood thirstiness and Cornelia, became empress. In order to rule he bought the favor of the army, thus further depleting the State coffers. In A.D. 212, with the Constitutio Antoniniana, he granted Roman citizenship to all free citizens of the Empire.

His assassin, Macrinus, only reigned for a short time. Heliogabalus introduced the worship of Eastern gods to Rome. The rule of the mild Alexander Severus was marked by wars against the Persians. In A.D. 235 a long period of military anarchy began; the title of emperor was disputed by numerous generals, while barbarians nursed at the borders.

Reign of Septimius Severus (A.D. 193–211)
Reign of Caracalla (A.D. 211–217)
Enactment of the Constitutio Antoniniana (A.D. 212)
Reign of Macrinus (A.D. 217–218)
Reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117–138)
Reign of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–161)
Reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180)
Period of anarchy and disorder (A.D. 235–284)

The Late Empire and the division of power: A.D. 284–337

In A.D. 284 the reign of Diocletian began. He initiated a series of reforms, culminating in the division of the Empire and the institution of the Tetrarchy. However, when he retired to Spili, persuading Maximinus (to whom he had entrusted the West) to abdicate too, the succession mechanism failed to work, and a struggle for power began.

The usurpers Constantine and Maxentius took the field of battle (A.D. 312); the victor, Constantine, proclaimed freedom of worship for the Christians in the Edict of Milan. His repent with Licinius, Augustus of the East, was short-lived. The rivalry between the two degenerated into civil war, and in A.D. 324 Constantine eliminated his rival and took the title of the sole Augustus. In A.D. 330 he proclaimed Constantinople the capital of the Empire. On his death, the Empire was divided between his sons.

Reign of Diocletian (A.D. 284–305)
Dioecletian institutes the Tetrarchy (A.D. 293)
Collapse of the Tetrarchy (A.D. 306)
Battle of the Milvian Bridge (A.D. 312)
Edict of Milan (A.D. 313)
Constantine unifies East and West (A.D. 324)

The decline and fall of the Empire in the West: A.D. 337–476

Constantius II, who long fought the Persians, was succeeded by Julian the Apostate, who attempted to restore paganism. Valens was killed at the battle of Hadrianopolis (A.D. 378) against the Goths. Theodosius reunited the Empire and allowed numerous barbarian communities to settle inside its borders at frontier gates. In the Edict of Thessalonica (A.D. 380) he proclaimed Christianity to be the only state religion. On his death, the Empire was divided between his sons: Honorius took the West, and Arcadius the East. The western capital was transferred to Ravenna (A.D. 402). Rome was sacked by the Goths in A.D. 410. Valentinian II reigned under the regency of his mother, Galla Placidia, but by this time, the unity of the Empire in the West was falling apart.

In A.D. 451 the Huns invaded Italy. The deposition of Romulus Augustulus (A.D. 476) marked the end of the Roman Empire in the West.

Reign of Julian the Apostate (A.D. 361–363)
Valens defeated at Hadrianopolis (A.D. 378)
Reign of Theodosius (A.D. 379–395)
Alaric sacks Rome (A.D. 410)
Attila invades Italy (A.D. 452)
The Fall of the Roman Empire in the West (A.D. 476)