

Geography and the Rise of Rome

CHAPTER EVENTS

753 BC

According to legend, Rome is founded.



c. 600 BC

The Etruscans take over Rome.

509 BC

The Roman Republic is founded.



264–146 BC

Rome and Carthage fight in the Punic Wars.



27 BC

Augustus becomes Rome's first emperor.

800 BC

WORLD EVENTS



c. 700 BC

The Assyrians conquer Israel.

600 BC



490 BC

The Persians invade Greece.

400 BC

334–323 BC

Alexander the Great builds his empire.

200 BC

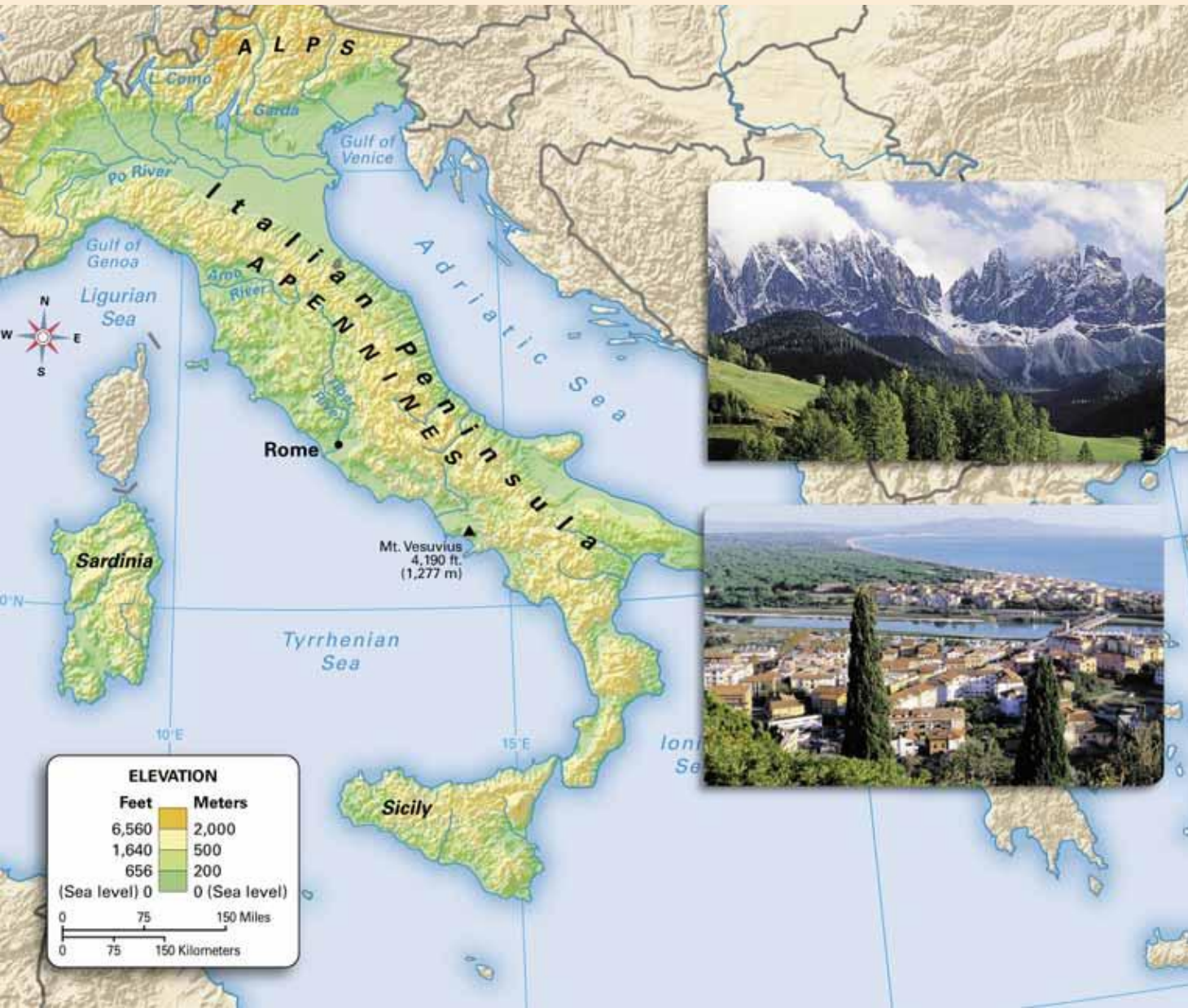
c. 221–206 BC

The Qin Dynasty rules China.



BC 1 AD

Italy: Physical Map



Mountains cover much of the Italian Peninsula. These mountains are in the Alps in northern Italy. Italy's fertile coastal plains have been settled for thousands of years.

The Geography of Italy

- **Rome grew from a small town on the Tiber River to become a great power. Rome conquered Greece, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Persia. Rome's central location and good climate were factors in its success. Because most of Italy is surrounded by water, Romans could easily travel by sea. The mountains in the north made it difficult to travel over land. The warm dry weather resulted in high crop yields, so the Romans had plenty of food.**

The Roman Forum, the ruins of which are shown above, was a public meeting place at the heart of Rome.



Rome's Legendary Origins

- **Rome's beginnings are a mystery. A few ancient ruins show that people lived there as early as 800 BC. Later, the Romans wanted a glorious past, so they created stories or legends about their history.**

Aeneas

According to the *Aeneid*, Aeneas carried his father from the burning city of Troy and then searched for a new home for the Trojans. After traveling around the Mediterranean, Aeneas finally settled in Italy.



Aeneas

- The early Romans believed their history began with the mythical hero **Aeneas** (i-NEE-uhs). Aeneas fled Troy when the Greeks destroyed the city during the Trojan War. He formed an alliance with a group called the Latins and traveled to Italy.
- This story is told in the *Aeneid* (i-NEE-id), an epic poem written by a poet named Virgil (VUHR-juhl) around 20 BC.

Romulus and Remus

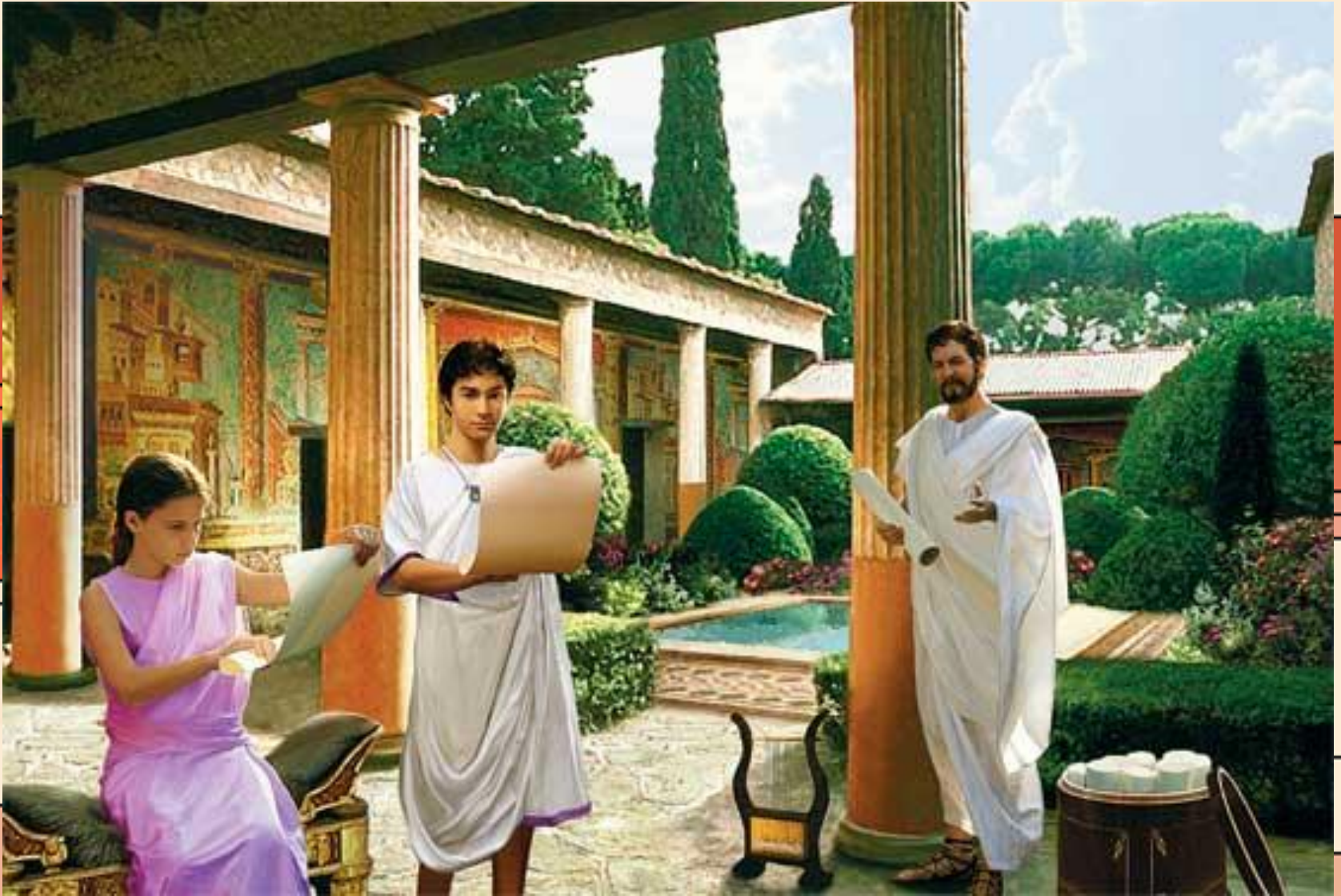
The Romans believed that the twins Romulus and Remus were descendants of Aeneas. In Roman legend, Romulus and Remus were rescued and raised by a wolf. Romulus later killed Remus and built the city of Rome.



Rome's Legendary Origins

- **According to legend, Rome was built by twin brothers Romulus (RAHM-yuh-luhs) and Remus (REE-muhs). Romulus killed Remus and became the first king of Rome.**
- **Scholars believe Rome started sometime between 800 and 700 BC.**
- **Early Rome was ruled by kings until the Romans created a republic in 509 BC.**

A Roman tutor teaches two young students how to read.



The Early Republic

- In the republic the Romans created, citizens elected leaders to govern them.
- They voted once a year to prevent any one person from gaining too much power.
- But early Rome had its troubles. For one thing, Rome was usually at war with nearby countries.

Italy

500 BC

Map: Italy, 500 BC This map shows different areas occupied by different groups of people. The yellow area around Rome was occupied by the Romans. The Etruscans were living in a large purple area in northern Italy that extended down to Rome. The Greeks lived along the coastline of Italy and the island to the southwest illustrated by the pink area. The Carthaginians surround the city of Carthage and is illustrated by the blue area.



Dictators

- To lead the country during war, the Romans elected **dictators**, rulers with almost absolute power. A dictator's power could not last more than six months.
- The most famous dictator was **Cincinnatus** (sin-suh-NAT-uhs), a farmer elected to defeat a major enemy. He resigned as dictator right after the war and went back to his farm.



Government

- **Within Rome the plebeians, or common people, worked for change.**
- **Only the city's patricians, the wealthy citizens, could be elected to rule Rome.**
- **When the plebeians elected a council, the patricians changed the government.**

Roman Society

Patricians	Plebeians
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wealthy, powerful citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common people
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nobles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peasants, crafts-people, traders, other workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small minority of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Majority of the population
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once controlled all aspects of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gained right to participate in government
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After 218 BC, not allowed to participate in trade or commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only Romans could be traders, so many because wealthy