

THE TARQUINS

I

THE next king of Rome was Ancus Marcius. He was a grandson of Numa Pompilius and a very good king. He thought that it would be an advantage to Rome to have a sea harbor for ships, so he founded a city at one of the mouths of the Tiber. The city was called Ostia and sat on the coast of the Mediterranean about fifteen miles from Rome.

During the reign of Ancus Marcius, a rich man named Lucumo came to live in Rome. He came from Tarquinii, a town some miles from Rome in a region called Etruria. The Romans called him Tarquinius which in English is Tarquin.

A very wonderful thing happened to Tarquin while he was on his way to Rome. He drove in a chariot with his wife Tanaquil seated beside him and their servants following behind. As they were approaching the city, an eagle appeared in the sky above them, then gently swooped down and snatched the cap from Tarquin's head with its beak. After hovering around for a few moments

the eagle replaced the cap and with loud screams flew away.

Tarquin was much surprised at this strange event. He did not know what to think of it. But Tanaquil was much pleased. She said to her husband that it was a sign sent by the gods which meant he was to be a great man, perhaps a king.

Tarquin was not long in Rome before he became a favorite with the citizens. The people liked him because he spent a great deal of money in doing good. The king also liked him because Tarquin was a man of great knowledge and wisdom whom he could ask for advice in affairs of government. When King Ancus became old and felt that his death was near he appointed



King Tarquin.

Tarquin the guardian of his two sons who were then but boys.

Soon afterwards Ancus died and the people elected Tarquin king. He reigned for nearly forty years and did a great deal for the good of the city.

II

IT was King Tarquin who began the building of the famous temple of Jupiter on the Saturnian Hill, the same hill on which stood the fortress that Romulus built. While the workmen were digging for the foundations of the temple, they found a man's head so well preserved that it looked as if it had been buried quite recently. This was so strange a thing that the augurs were asked about it. They said it was a sign that Rome would become the *head* or chief city of the world. So the new building was called the Capitol from *caput*, the Latin word for *head*, and the hill was called the Capitoline Hill. This has given our language a word. We call the buildings where Congress and state legislatures meet Capitols.

It took a long time to finish the great and beautiful Capitol. It covered more than eight acres. Its gates or doors were of solid brass, thickly plated with gold. The walls inside were all marble, ornamented with beautiful figures engraved in silver.

Tarquin also began several other works in Rome, many of which were too great and costly to be finished in a lifetime. One of them was a wall around the city. The wall that Romulus made was only around Palatine Hill. Since then, however, the city had been much enlarged. In course of time it covered seven hills. This is why Rome is often called the seven-hilled city, the seven hills being the Palatine, the Capitoline, the Caelian, the Quirinal, the Esquiline, the Viminal and the Aventine.

One of the other things Tarquin did was establish a kind of police called *lictors*. These were officers who always walked before the king whenever he appeared in public. Each lictor bore upon his shoulder an axe enclosed in a bundle of rods tied with a red strap. This was called the *fusces*. It was a mark of the power of the king. The axe meant that the king might order criminals to be beheaded and the rods meant that he might punish offenders by flogging.

Another work of Tarquin was the Circus, afterwards called the Circus Maximus (*great circus*). This was a stadium for horse and chariot races. The Romans were very fond of such amusements. Great numbers of them always went to the shows for they did not have to pay for admission. The shows were paid for by rich Romans and by the government, both of whom sought the people's favor.

As so many people attended the circus it had to be very large. In the time when Rome was an empire, which you will read about later in this book, the Circus Maximus was so large that it contained seats for 250,000 people. The word *circus* refers to the *circuit* or *track* which was long with tight turns at each end. This is how the word *circus* has come into our own language.

III

BESIDES building a circus King Tarquin also greatly improved the Forum by making covered walks or porticoes all around it. The Forum was a large open space at the foot of the Capitoline Hill where public meetings were held and where people came to hear the news or talk about politics. It was also used as a marketplace and merchants showed their goods in shops or stores along the porticoes. In the course of time, great buildings

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the actual lesson is pgs. 19-23 in the
student book

Lesson 4 (pp. 19-23)

The Tarquins (616-510 B.C.)



Facts to Know

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| Ancus Marcius | <i>fourth king; built the harbor city Ostia</i> |
| Tarquin | <i>Lucumo; built the Capitol, Temple of Jupiter, Circus</i> |
| Tanaquil | <i>wife of Tarquin; thought gods made Tarquin king</i> |
| seven-hilled city | <i>a nickname for Rome</i> |
| Circus Maximus | <i>racetrack built by Tarquin; could seat 250,000</i> |
| Servius Tullius | <i>son-in-law of Tarquin; first to take census</i> |
| Tarquin Superbus | <i>Tarquin the Proud; killed Servius, last monarch</i> |
| Sibylline Books | <i>the "holy books" of the Romans</i> |

Vocabulary

1. Ostia _____
2. augur _____
3. Capitol _____
4. lictor _____
5. fasces _____
6. portico _____
7. census _____
8. papyrus _____
9. volume _____



The Tarquins (616-510 B.C.)

Comprehension Questions

1. What country was Tarquin from?
2. What is a male fortune teller called? A female fortune teller?
3. On what hill did Tarquin build the Temple of Jupiter?
4. Explain what a fasces looked like and what each part represented?
5. Where were public meetings held?
6. What events took place in the Circus Maximus?

Activities

1. What is the difference in meaning between the words *capitol* and *capital*? How do they both relate to the Latin word *caput*?
2. Explain the symbolism of the fasces.
3. Find out when the United States had its last census? How many citizens were there? When is the next US census?
4. Identify on your map of Ancient Rome map: Via Ostiens (toward Ostia)
Circus Maximus
5. Identify on your map of Ancient Italia map: Ostia