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The Rise and Fall of Rome

The Roman Senate

At roughly the same time that democracy was evolving in Athens, so too was the concept evolving in another small city state on the Italian peninsula, **Rome**. As legend has it, once Romulus defeated his brother Remus and took control of the city, becoming the first king (rex), he appointed Senators as advisors from the among the most influential families.

Define the following categories of Roman citizens:

~ Patricians - Relatives of ~~Pat~~ ^{original} ~~Senates~~

Plebeians - Newly conquered citizens

Rome then continued on for several generation, electing a succession of kings, until the overthrow of Lucius Tarquinius, by Brutus. Tensions came to a head when the king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, assaulted Lucretia, wife and daughter to powerful Roman nobles. The dishonoring of Lucretia prompted her family to seek revenge. Four of her kinsmen, led by Lucius Junius Brutus, incited a revolution that deposed and expelled Tarquinius and his family from Rome in 509 BC.

(Define) Consul - two highest magistrates + commander of the Roman legions

Why did the Senate eventually grow to become more influential the office of Consul?

The consul only held office once a year while the senate was a permanent body; in experience + prestige, it's individual members were often superior to the consul of the year. The consul usually has unexperienced, rich, and young people, where as the senate served for multiple years + where experienced

Over the next several hundred years, the republic came to incorporate greater representation from the diverse corners of Roman society. Various "Curiata" or "Assemblies" were organized to allow for representation by members of the military and Plebeians. Under Julius Augustus Caesar, the authority of the Senate was diminished by Caesar, who filled it's ranks with the members from the farthest reach of the empire.

Eventually, Rome would be undone by it's massive size. It simply could not defend the vast territories it had conquered, and Rome found itself under constant threat of invasion. To save the empire, Constantine moved the empire east to Byzantium, founding the eastern Roman empire of Constantinople.

* Early Senate existed as an advisory council to Roman Emperors, but eventually grew to become the most powerful political branch in Rome

* The senate shared power w/ the consuls, the Curiata, and Concilium