

LIVY

THE HISTORY
OF ROME

Books 1–5

Translated, with Introduction and Notes, by
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then they would allow a vote. The granting of this interval calmed the situation in the city. But the Aequi did not give them a lasting respite. They broke the treaty that had been made with the Romans the year before and entrusted the command of their forces to Gracchus Cloelius, by far the most outstanding leader among the Aequi.

With Gracchus as their general, they invaded first the territory of Lanuvium and then that of Tusculum.⁵⁷ Loaded with booty, they pitched camp on Mount Algidus. Quintus Fabius, Publius Velutius, and Aulus Postumius came from Rome to their camp to complain of the wrongs and to demand satisfaction in accordance with the treaty. The Aequian general ordered them to give their orders from the Roman senate to the oak tree, saying that meanwhile he would get on with other business. The oak, a huge tree, overhung the general's headquarters, offering a resting place in its dense shade. Then one of the envoys, as he departed, said, "Let the sacred oak and whatever gods there are hear that the treaty has been broken by you. Let them support our complaints now and later our arms when we shall avenge the simultaneous violation of the rights of gods and of men." When the envoys returned to Rome, the senate ordered one consul to lead the army to Algidus against Gracchus, changing the other to plunder the territory of the Aequi. The tribunes, as was their custom, tried to prevent the levy and might perhaps have held out to the end, but suddenly a new tower arose

26. The Sabines again invade Roman territory, and the consul Minucius is besieged in his camp. Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus is appointed dictator and returns to Rome from his farm.

A huge force of Sabines made a plundering raid and almost reached the walls of Rome; the fields were despoiled and the city stricken with terror. At this, the plebs willingly took up arms. The protests of the tribunes were in vain; two large armies were enrolled, one of which Nautius led against the Sabines, pitching camp near Eretum.⁵⁸ He made small raids, mostly night attacks, and created such devastation in the Sabine countryside that, in comparison, the Roman territory seemed almost untouched by war. Minucius had neither the same good fortune nor the forceful purpose in the execution of his assignment. He pitched camp not far from the enemy and, after sustaining a mi-

57. *Lanuvium*: a city in the Alban hills, some twenty miles south of Rome.

58. *Eretum*: a location some seventeen miles east of Rome on the Via Salaria.

nor defeat, took fright and stayed inside the camp. When the enemy realized this, their boldness increased as a result of their opponents' fear, as happens. They attacked by night and, when open force did not produce results, surrounded the camp with siegeworks the next day. But before these could be completed to close all the exits, five cavalymen were sent to Rome through the enemy's outposts with the news that the consul and army were under siege. Nothing more surprising or unexpected could have happened. The panic and fear were just as great as if the enemy were besieging the city, not a camp. They sent for the consul Nautius. But since he did not seem equal to the task, it was decided to appoint a dictator to restore their stricken fortunes. Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus was nominated by unanimous consent.

What followed deserves the attention of all those who reject all human qualities in preference for riches and think that there is no room for great honors or valor except amid an abundance of wealth.⁵⁹ The sole hope of the rule of the Roman people, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, cultivated a field of some four acres across the Tiber, an area known as the Quinctian Meadows, opposite the place where the dockyards are now.⁶⁰ There he was found by the delegation from the senate. Whether he was bending over his spade as he dug a ditch or plowing, he was certainly, as is generally agreed, intent on the job of working the land. After they had exchanged greetings, he was asked to put on his toga and listen to the senate's mandate, which, they prayed, might turn out well for him and the state. Amazed, he asked, "Is everything all right?" as he ordered his wife Racilia to bring his toga quickly from the hut.⁶¹ Wiping off the dust and sweat, he put on his toga and stepped forward. The delegates saluted him as dictator, congratulated him, and summoned him to the city, explaining the terrifying situation in the army. The state had provided a boat for Quinctius, and, as he reached the other side, his three sons came to meet him, followed by his other relatives and friends and then most of the senators. Attended by this throng, with

59. *deserves the attention*: this is a somewhat free translation of the Latin *operae pretium* (a return for the effort), a phrase that is identical with the second and third words of the Preface, thus marking a bid for particular attention to the ensuing story of Cincinnatus' dictatorship. In the first pentad, there are only two occurrences of this phrase, which is an introductory rhetorical formula, here and 5.21.

60. *rule of the Roman people*: the Latin *imperium*, translated by Foster in the Loeb as "empire," is used both for a magistrate's power to command and for the object or area of his command.

Quinctian Meadows: a toponym memorializing Cincinnatus' stay in this area.

61. *Is everything all right?:* this greeting was also used by Tarquinius Collatinus to his wife Lucretia at 1.58.

lictors leading the way, he was escorted to his home. There was also a large gathering of plebeians, who were not so pleased to see Quinctius because they thought that the power of the dictatorship was excessive and that this man would prove too extreme as a result of that power. Nothing more was done that night except to keep watch in the city.

27. 458 BCE. Cincinnatus immediately makes preparations to relieve the beleaguered consul, sets out from the city before nightfall, and reaches Algidus in the middle of the night.

On the following day, the dictator went into the forum before dawn and named as his master of the horse Lucius Tarquinius, a man of patrician birth who, because of his poverty, had served in the infantry but was nonetheless considered to be by far the best of the Roman warriors.⁶² With his master of the horse, Cincinnatus came before an assembly of the people and proclaimed a suspension of public business, ordered the shops throughout the city to be closed, and forbade anyone to engage in any private business. He then commanded all the men of military age to assemble in arms on the Campus Martius before sunset, bringing cooked rations for five days and twelve stakes.⁶³ Those who were too old to go on campaign he ordered to cook rations for their neighbors who were serving as soldiers, while the latter were preparing their weapons and in search of stakes. And so the young men ran off in different directions to look for stakes, taking whatever was nearest to hand. No one was stopped. They all presented themselves promptly, as the dictator had decreed. He then drew up the column to be ready as much for fighting, should the need arise, as for marching. The dictator himself led the legions, and the master of the horse the cavalry. In each line they voiced the words of encouragement that the situation demanded: they should speed up; they needed to hurry so that they could reach the enemy while it was still night. A consul and Roman army were under siege and had been cut off for three days. What each day and night might bring was uncertain. The turning points of great events often hinged on a single mo-

62. *Lucius Tarquinius*: the first mention of a Tarquin in Rome since the expulsion of the kings and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus (consul of 509 BCE).

63. *stakes*: three or four stakes of wood were the usual allocation per soldier. These stakes were some four and a half feet in length, for use in making a palisade or rampart. The additional number indicates the urgency of the situation: the Romans intended to make a rampart immediately on arrival and not take time to obtain wood on Algidus.

ment. The soldiers also pleased their commanders by shouting to each other, "Hurry up, standard-bearer!" "Men, follow his lead!" In the middle of the night they reached Algidus and halted when they realized that they were now close to the enemy.

28. Cincinnatus surrounds the besiegers with a palisade. After fierce fighting, the Aequi surrender and Cincinnatus humiliates them by making them pass under the yoke.

The dictator rode around and observed, as best he could in the darkness, the extent and shape of the camp; then he directed the military tribunes to order the men to throw their packs into one place and return to their ranks with their weapons and stakes. His orders were carried out. Then, keeping the order of their march, he surrounded the enemy camp with his entire army in an extended line. He ordered them to raise a shout when the signal was given; after shouting, each man was to dig a ditch and make a rampart in front of his own position. The signal followed close on the issuing of these commands. The men carried out his orders. The shouts resounded all around the enemy, went over their camp, and reached the camp of the consul Minucius. In the one place, it caused panic; in the other, great joy. The Romans were thankful that the shout came from their fellow citizens and that help was at hand. They even took the initiative, threatening the enemy with attacks from their outposts and guard stations. Minucius said that they must not delay: that shout signified not only the arrival of help but also the beginning of battle. It would also be surprising if the enemy camp were not already under attack from outside. And so he ordered his men to take up arms and follow him. The battle began in darkness. With a shout, they signaled to the dictator's legions that for their part, too, they were in the fight.

The Aequi were already preparing to prevent the efforts to surround them when the fighting was begun by the enemy from within their camp. To prevent a sortie through the middle of their camp, they turned from fighting those who were entrenching themselves to face the forces attacking from within, thus giving the encircling forces the rest of the night to continue their work. The engagement with the consul lasted until dawn. At first light the Aequi were already enclosed by the dictator's rampart and were having difficulty withstanding the battle against one army. Then their rampart was stormed by Quinctius' army, which had taken up their weapons as soon as they had completed their siegework. Here a new battle threatened, and there had been no letup in the other. Then, under the pressure of this

double danger, the Aequi turned from fighting to praying as they begged the dictator on the one side and the consul on the other not to make their victory end in a massacre, but to take their weapons and let them go.

The consul ordered them to go to the dictator, who, in his anger, added humiliating conditions to their surrender.⁶⁴ He ordered that Gracchus Cloelius, their chief, and other leading men be brought to him in chains and that the town of Corbio be evacuated.⁶⁵ He said that he did not need Aequian blood; they were permitted to go. But in order to exact a confession that their people had been defeated and subjugated, they were to pass under the yoke. A yoke was made from three spears; two of these were fixed in the ground and the third laid across them and bound. Under this yoke the dictator sent the Aequi.

29. Cincinnatus reprimands the consular army, awards booty only to his own men, and demotes Minucius. He celebrates a triumph and resigns from the dictatorship immediately after the condemnation of Volscius. The tribunes are reelected for the fifth time.

The captured enemy camp was full of all kinds of supplies—Cincinnatus had sent the Aequi away with nothing—and he gave all the booty exclusively to his own soldiers, reprimanding the consular army and the consul himself. “Soldiers,” he said, “you will not have a share of the booty from the enemy whose booty you almost became. And as for you, Lucius Minucius, until you have the spirit of a consul, you will command these legions as a lieutenant.” So, Minucius resigned from the consulship and, as ordered, remained with the army. But the spirit of this army was so obedient and submissive toward a superior commander that they remembered the good he had done rather than his reprimand and voted the dictator a golden crown weighing one pound, saluting him as their patron as he departed.⁶⁶

In Rome, the senate, convened by Quintus Fabius, who was in charge of the city, ordered Quinctius to enter the city in triumph with his troops in the same formation as that in which they had marched. The enemy leaders were led in front of his chariot, military standards were carried at the head

64. The referral to the dictator is because he was the supreme commander.

65. *Corbio*: a town near Algidus, some fifteen miles south of Rome near Labici.

66. *patron*: the implication is that they all became his clients.

of the procession, and the army followed, laden with booty. Feasts are said to have been set before all the houses; the soldiers followed the dictator's chariot, feasting as they marched, singing the triumphal song, and shouting gibes like revelers.⁶⁷ On that day, with everyone's approval, citizenship was given to Lucius Mamilius of Tusculum.

The dictator would immediately have resigned from office had not the trial of Marcus Volscius, the false witness, held him back. Fear of the dictator prevented the tribunes from blocking the trial. Volscius was condemned and went into exile at Lanuvium. On the sixteenth day, Quinctius resigned from the dictatorship, though his term was for six months.⁶⁸ During that time, the consul Nautius fought a successful battle near Eretum against the Sabines, who suffered this new defeat in addition to the devastation of their fields. Fabius was sent to Algidus to succeed Minucius. At the end of the year, there was agitation by the tribunes about the law. However, because two armies were abroad, the senators maintained that no proposal should be brought before the people. The plebs succeeded in electing the same tribunes for the fifth time. They say that wolves chased by dogs were seen on the Capitol. Because of this prodigy, the Capitol was purified.⁶⁹ Such were the events of this year.

~~30. 457 B.C.E. The Aequi kill the garrison at Corbio and take Ortona. Fear of the Aequi and Sabines enables the plebeians to get the senators to allow the number of tribunes to be increased to ten. The Roman consul recovers Corbio and Ortona.~~

~~Quinctus Minucius and Marcus Horatius Pulvillus were the next consuls. At the beginning of this year, although there was peace abroad, the same tribunes and the same law caused strife at home. The situation would have developed further, so inflamed were men's minds, had not the news arrived, as if by design, that the garrison at Corbio had been wiped out by a night~~

67. *shouting gibes*: ribaldry and insults directed at the general were a customary part of a Roman triumph. Such ribaldry was thought to be a warning against excessive arrogance and to avert envy and the anger of the gods.

68. By resigning as soon as possible, Cincinnatus showed not only how quickly he had completed his mission but also that he was not aiming at kingship.

69. The prodigy apparently indicated that the gods had not been satisfied with the purification noted in 3.18. The wolves symbolized the Roman people, thus recalling the raid of Appius Herdonius and the slaughter on the Capitoline; see Appendix 3, p. 430.