Short Paper Assignment
Due Monday, September 22nd, 1.25pm in class

Based on the excerpts below, briefly (500-750 words) analyze the main themes of the first 17 chapters of book 1 of Livy’s *From the Founding of the City*. What messages is Livy trying to convey in these chapters — about the earliest history of Rome, about the character of the Roman state and people, about his own time, or even warnings for the future? You may choose to focus on a single theme, or draw together several themes. Your essay must have a thesis (*i.e.*, it should make a point that requires explanation and argument), which you should support by means of close, careful analysis of specific passages.

Please follow the citation guidelines given by the Skidmore Classics Dept. [Guide to Writing in Classics](#).

Preface: “I have very little doubt, too, that for the majority of my readers the earliest times and those immediately succeeding, will possess little attraction; they will hurry on to these modern days in which the might of a long paramount nation is wasting by internal decay. I, on the other hand, shall look for a further reward of my labors in being able to close my eyes to the evils which our generation has witnessed for so many year ....”

1.1: “… he gave his right hand as a solemn pledge of friendship for the future. A formal treaty was made between the leaders and mutual greetings exchanged between the armies. Latinus received Aeneas as a guest in his house, and there, in the presence of his tutelary deities, completed the political alliance by a domestic one, and gave his daughter in marriage to Aeneas.”

1.3: “Such had been the growth of the Latin power, mainly through the defeat of the Etruscans, that neither at the death of Aeneas, nor during the regency of Lavinia, nor during the immature years of the reign of Ascanius, did either Mezentius and the Etruscans or any other of their neighbors venture to attack them.”

1.4: “But the Fates had, I believe, already decreed the origin of this great city and the foundation of the mightiest empire under heaven.”

1.5: “It is said that the festival of the Lupercalia, which is still observed, was even in those days celebrated on the Palatine hill... Evander, an Arcadian [supposed to be the oldest inhabited part of Greece], had held that territory many years before, and had introduced an annual festival from Arcadia in which young men ran about naked for sport and wantonness, in honor of the Lycaean Pan, whom the Romans afterwards called Inuus... It was while the two brothers [Romulus & Remus] were engaged in it that the brigands, enraged at losing their plunder, ambushed them.”
1.6: “These pleasant anticipations [of Romulus and Remus building a city] were disturbed by the ancestral curse — ambition — which led to a deplorable quarrel over what was at first a trivial matter. As they were twins and no claim to precedence could be based on seniority, they decided to consult the tutelary deities of the place by means of augury as to who was to give his name to the new city, and who was to rule it after it had been founded.”

1.7: “[The king, Evander] was looked up to with reverence for his knowledge of letters — a new and marvelous thing for uncivilized men.”

1.8: “After the claim of religion had been duly acknowledged, Romulus called his people to a council. As nothing could unite them into one political body but for the observance of common laws and customs, he gave them a body of laws, which he thought would only be respected by a rude and uncivilized race of men if he inspired them with awe by assuming the outward symbols of power. He surrounded himself with greater state, and in particular he called into his service twelve lictors. Some think that he fixed upon this number from the number of the birds who foretold his sovereignty; but I am inclined to agree with those who think that as this class of public officers was borrowed from the same people from whom the sella curulis and the toga praetexta were adopted — their neighbors, the Etruscans — so the number itself also was taken from them... He created a hundred senators; either because that number was adequate, or because there were only a hundred heads of houses who could be created. In any case they were called the 'Patres' in virtue of their rank, and their descendants were called 'Patricians.' “

1.9: “The Roman State had now become so strong that it was a match for any of its neighbors in war, but its greatness threatened to last for only one generation, since through the absence of women there was no hope of offspring, and their was no right of intermarriage with their neighbors. Acting on the advice of the senate, Romulus sent envoys amongst the surrounding nations to ask for alliance and the right of intermarriage on behalf of his new community .... Nowhere did the envoys meet with a favorable reception.”

1.10: “... [Romulus] marked out the site for the temple of Jupiter, and addressing the god by a new title, uttered the following invocation: 'Jupiter Feretrius [= the subduer of enemies]! These arms taken from a king, I, Romulus a king and conqueror, bring to thee, and on this domain, whose bounds I have in will and purpose traced, I dedicate a temple to receive the spolia opima which posterity following my example shall bear higher, taken from the kings and generals of our foes slain in battle.' Such was the origin of the first temple dedicated in Rome.”
1.11: “Spurius Tarpeius was in command of the Roman citadel. Whilst his daughter had gone outside the fortifications to fetch water for some religious ceremonies, [the Sabine king] Tatius bribed her to admit his troops within the citadel. Once admitted, they crushed her to death beneath their shields. A further story runs that the Sabines were in the habit of wearing heavy gold armlets on their left arms and richly jeweled rings, and that the girl made them promise to give her ‘what they had on their left arms,’ accordingly they piled their shields upon her instead of golden gifts.”

1.12: “However this may be, the Sabines were in possession of the citadel. And they would not come down from it the next day, though the Roman army was drawn up in battle array over the whole of the ground between the Palatine and the Capitoline hill, until, exasperated at the loss of their citadel and determined to recover it, the Romans mounted to the attack .... Romulus ... lifting up his hands to heaven, exclaimed: "Jupiter, it was thy omen that I obeyed when I laid here on the Palatine the earliest foundations of the City. Now the Sabines hold its citadel, having bought it by a bribe, and coming thence have seized the valley and are pressing hitherwards in battle. Do thou, Father of gods and men, drive hence our foes, banish terror from Roman hearts, and stay our shameful flight! Here do I vow a temple to thee, 'Jove the Stayer,' as a memorial for the generations to come that it is through thy present help that the City has been saved." Then, as though he had become aware that his prayer had been heard, he cried, "Back, Romans! Jupiter Optimus Maximus bids you stand and renew the battle." They stopped as though commanded by a voice from heaven ... [and] ... the fortune of Rome was in the ascendant.”

1.13: “Then it was that the Sabine women, whose wrongs had led to the war, throwing off all womanish fears in their distress, went boldly into the midst of the flying missiles with disheveled hair and rent garments. Running across the space between the two armies they tried to stop any further fighting .... 'If,' they cried, 'you are weary of these ties of kindred, these marriage-bonds, then turn your anger upon us.... Better for us to perish than to live without one or the other of you, as widows or as orphans.' The armies and their leaders were alike moved by this appeal .... It was not only peace that was made, the two nations were united into one State, the royal power was shared between them, and the seat of government for both nations was Rome ....”

1.15: “Throughout — whether we consider the courage [Romulus] showed in recovering his ancestral throne, or the wisdom he displayed in founding the City and adding to its strength through war and peace alike — we find nothing incompatible with the belief in his divine origin and his admission to divine immortality after death.”

1.16: ‘Go,’ said [the late, divine Romulus to Proculus Julius] 'tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that my Rome should be the head of all the world. Let them henceforth cultivate the arts of war, and let them know assuredly, and hand down the knowledge to posterity, that no human might can withstand the arms of Rome.'”
1.17: “Disputes arose among the senators about the vacant throne. It was not the jealousies of individual citizens, for no one was sufficiently prominent in so young a State, but the rivalries of parties in the State that led to this strife. The Sabine families were apprehensive of losing their fair share of the sovereign power .... The ancient Romans could ill brook a foreign king: but amidst this diversity of political views, all were for a monarchy; they had not yet tasted the sweets of liberty .... As an act of grace, [the senators] committed the supreme power into the hands of the people, but in such a way that they did not give away more privilege than they retained. For they passed a decree that when the people had chosen a king, his election would only be valid after the senate had ratified it by their authority. The same procedure exists today in the passing of laws and the election of magistrates.”