

Two sets of brothers and the forward stride to granting Roman citizenship...

Two dates are important: 753 BCE and 212 CE

The Romans proved the founding myth of **Romulus** and **Remus** was *true*. As a tourist, you could visit Romulus's preserved, one-room hut on the Palatine Hill. As for the suckling **lupa** and the crime of **fratricidium**, the less said, the better

Romulus, on founding Rome, needed men and women to populate the settlement. He invited others to join him, and if they did, they too had *full* citizenship

The second date refers to **Marcus Aurelius Antoninus**, known as **Caracalla**. History parallels itself: Caracalla's younger brother **Publius Septimius Geta** often referred to as **Geta**, died on alleged orders from Caracalla. The year following Geta's murder, Caracalla pursued a relentless **damnatio memoriae** to remove his brother from memory. During the same turbulence, Caracalla publishes the **Constitutio Antoniniana** edict which granted full Roman citizenship to *all* free men

Commentators at the time and historians since, have debated the *raison d'être* of Caracalla's sweeping gesture. The edict enfranchised approximately 30 million free men. (Rome's total population is estimated at 55 million. The difference is existing citizens and others, such as; slaves)

To find the answer, the basis for Caracalla's gesture, look to events forward from Romulus

+ + +

From the outset, Rome had pursued an aggressive policy of expansionism throughout the Italian peninsula. The first peoples to encounter Roman aggressiveness were the **Latini**, the people of **Latium**

While the **Latini** sought greater inclusion, Rome was reluctant. In brief, the **Social War**, **bellum sociale** was fought from 91 to 87 BCE. What is important is *not* the cause of war, but the *result* of war. The **Latini** achieved inclusion, the status and influence, and the right to vote, that had accrued as a result of association with Rome. Now, they *too*, were Romans

Importantly, three pieces of legislation were passed that included all **Italic peoples**, the **socii**. The three laws are, the **Lex Iulia de Civitate Latinis (et sociis) Danda** conferred Roman citizenship on all citizens of Latin towns and Italic towns who had *not* rebelled. The **Lex Plautia Papiria de Civitate Sociis Danda** granted Roman citizenship to all federated towns in Italy south of the river Po. And the third piece of legislation is the **Lex Pompeia de Transpadanis** which granted **ius Latii** to the communities of **Transpadania**, a region north of the Po, who had sided with Rome. To be precise, citizenship was granted to civic officials in their respective municipal roles

The above laws are broad. Included in the three pieces of legislation is the affirmation of **ius Latii**. Some variance in rights may have occurred, but similarity prevailed:

ius commercii. **The Right to Trade**. The right to have commercial relations, common procedures of contract

ius connubii, **The Right to Marry**. The right to marry pursuant to law

ius migrationis. **The Right to Migrate**. The right to retain citizenship on relocation to another municipality

ius suffragii. **The Right to Vote**. To vote, but the right must be exercised in Rome

ius civitatis mutandae. **The Right to Become a Roman Citizen**. If you are free born

Caesar, in 44 BCE, just before his assassination, granted **ius Latii** to **Sicily** (Rome's first overseas acquisition)

With continued Roman expansion overseas, **ius Latii** became a means to integrate far-held lands. **Vespasian** extended **ius Latii** to all of **Spain** in 74 CE, and **Hadrian** in 123 CE extended the **ius Latii** to all who had held an office of **magistratus**

+ + +

Why Caracalla granted the **Constitutio Antoniniana** is unknown. The following is suggested:

It is asserted the driving force for the publication of the **Constitutio Antoniniana** edict is **Iulia Domna**

Iulia Domna, first under her husband, **Septimius Severus**, and then under her elder son **Caracalla**; handled much of the imperial correspondence. She also had an interest in philosophy. Thus, by personal inclination and position, she would have had understanding and insight concerning official policies and issues. (How far back did she read chancery records?) In her role as matriarch, to preserve her husband's memory and, to counter the charge of **fratricidium**; did she published the edict under Caracalla's name to safeguard the **Severan** dynasty?

We know only of a son who had no interest in governance and focused on military matters