

# Romulus and Remus, the Founding Myth of Rome: A Scenario for Teaching Third-Grade High School Students by Using ICT

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**Abstract:** The New Curricula are aimed at making the teaching of literary courses even more interesting and interactive, primarily through the integration of ICT. This proposal discusses the integration of ICT and Art, use of the group cooperation method, learning through investigative processes, and development of the students' critical ability in the subject of Latin. The proposed teaching scenario refers to the founding myth of Rome, i.e., that of Romulus and Remus. More specifically, in order to implement the scenario, the following techniques are utilized: enriched narrative, group cooperation teaching, discourse, artistic creation, "speech contests", and role play. Thus, a dead language becomes attractive and productive for students. At the same time, the students' self-motivation, creative expression, and empathy are enhanced.

**Key words:** education, Latin, ICT, group cooperation teaching

## 1. Introduction

The scenario is in line with the new curricula for the subject of Latin, which place an emphasis on group cooperation teaching, learning through investigative processes, and the development of the students' critical ability. Along with that, through this scenario, it is attempted to connect various aspects of Roman culture to the modern era.

## 2. The Teaching Proposal

### 2.1 Implementation Points of the Teaching Proposal

This is a scenario for teaching the subject of Latin to third-grade high school students for 5 teaching hours. It is designed for a class of approximately fifteen students, and is based on an untaught text that was provided through further training in the context of the New Curricula in spring 2023, in teaching the subject of Latin.

The untaught text is the following: "Rhea Silvia filia Numitoris, qui Albam Longam regnabat, est. Mars Rheam amat et in silva sacra eam violat. Sic Rhea geminos filios, Romulum et Remum, parit. Amulius, patruus Rheae, servos suos in Tiberim Rheam deicere iubet geminosque pueros in corbe ponere et in aquam relinquere imperat. Sed lupa pueros invenit eosque nutrit. Postea Romulus et Remus novam patriam constituere decernunt. Romulus in colle Palatino considit, Remus autem in Aventino. Sed dei signo divino duobus viris novum oppidum in Palatino colle aedificare aperiunt. Romulus et Remus inter se litigant; Romulus Remum necat. Sic novum

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oppidum hodieque Romam appellant”.

After processing the above untaught text from a language, grammar, and syntax point of view, the students proceed with an approach to interpret it, where emphasis is placed on the teaching proposal in question.

Additionally, in order to implement it, students will rely on their pre-existing knowledge of the Latin language, Roman history, ancient Greek mythology, and philosophy, and will attempt to link the mythology of Rome and the Roman world, in general, with the subjects of Geography (geographic boundaries of Italy and Rome), Ancient History, Modern Greek Language (rhetorical speech), Philosophy (Kantian perspective), and Religious Education (religious beliefs).

## **2.2 Setting Teaching Goals**

In this teaching proposal, the following goals have been set:

- In terms of knowledge:
- To acquire knowledge of Roman myths and culture.
- To become familiar, in specific, with the founding myth of Rome, adventure of Rhea Silvia (known to them as Ilia from the second grade), birth and abandonment of her twin children, their upbringing by a she-wolf, and the fratricide that resulted in the founding of Rome.

In terms of skills:

- To narrate the myth about the foundation of Rome and understand its value.
- To express themselves creatively regarding this myth.
- To seek information from online sources about this myth.
- To produce their own written texts on the founding myth of Rome.
- To work together to accomplish a goal; a common assignment.
- To compare different versions of the myth.
- To investigate similar events in other eras and cultures.

In terms of attitudes:

- To understand the different versions that exist about the founding myth of Rome.
- To realize how much this myth has affected many later works of art.
- To reflect on the tragic characters of Rhea Silvia, Remus, and Romulus.
- To understand that the myth about the foundation of Rome is linked to today’s events.
- To reflect on common points between the Roman and the ancient Greek worlds.
- To develop empathy.
- To adopt values such as the values of respect, appreciation, and cooperation.

## **2.3 Course of Teaching**

### **2.3.1 1<sup>st</sup> Hour**

At this stage, based on the flipped (inverted) classroom technique, a short video about the mythical foundation of Rome is presented. After the video has finished, and by looking at the picture of the she-wolf from printed material that has been distributed to them in the classroom, discourse on this myth begins by asking the students to recall previous knowledge on the founding myth of Rome from the second grade (The prophecy of Zeus, lesson X), as well as on political conflict in the Roman world from the first-grade subject of Ancient History. Then, through the enriched narrative technique and use of diagrams on the board, the teacher points out the descentance of Remus and Romulus from Aeneas (an already familiar face to the children from Homer’s Iliad),

and the different versions of the myth - as rendered by Greek and Latin writers (such as Plutarch, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Titus Livius, Tacitus, Ovid, and Virgil), regarding the paternity, abandonment, and upbringing of the two twin brothers (by a she-wolf, a woodpecker, and the shepherd Faustulus), and their fratricide. In this way, they place the given Latin excerpt in its mythological context.

#### 2.3.2 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour

At this stage, group cooperation teaching in the IT laboratory will be used. Students will be divided into four groups of three — four people, with each group focusing on a specific assignment and a specific role. This means that the first group, i.e., the Artists, will search for works of art (statues, paintings, songs, novels, etc.) on the theme of the she-wolf (both Roman and non-Roman), in order to understand the influence of this animal on art. The second group, i.e., the Philologists, will search for the etymology of the names “Remus or Romos”, “Romulus”, “Rome”, “Rhea Silvia”, “Numitor”, and “Lupa = she-wolf” — and the special importance that the Romans attached to this noun, in order to show the close connection of Latin with ancient Greek. The third group, i.e. the Geographers, will search for information and images showing Rome and its 7 hills (the two hills are already mentioned in the given Latin extract) from antiquity to the present day. Finally, the fourth group, i.e., the Philosophers, will search for the special meaning and symbolism of the Roman she-wolf. To ensure better cooperation among the students of each group, an “agreement for better cooperation” is signed. Throughout the implementation of these tasks, the teacher inspires and encourages their students. After finishing the tasks, each group presents the results of its activities to the whole classroom. In order for students to pay attention to the presentation of each group, they are asked to write down 3 positive comments on the presentation of each group. In this way, a good learning environment is achieved, at the same time.

#### 2.3.3 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> Hour

At this stage, printed material with focused activities and role assignment is distributed. Students are divided into groups of three to four people either in the computer lab or in the classroom, using laptops, in order to delve into different aspects of the founding myth by recalling knowledge from Greek mythology, ancient history, and Religious Education, and making use of knowledge of philosophy and Modern Greek Language. More specifically, the first group, i.e., the Researchers, undertake to investigate other cases of children abandonment based on their previously acquired knowledge (the abandonment of Oedipus from the second-grade subject of Antigone, and of Paris in the hills of Troy from the secondary school, are already known to them). The second group, i.e., the Jurists, are asked to run a “speech contest” among their members by approaching fratricide and the ambition for power from a moral (Kantian perspective, based on the knowledge acquired on the principles of Kant’s philosophy from the second grade), legal, and religious (based on the beliefs of the church) point of view, after first listing other examples of fratricide (e.g., the first fratricide of Abel from the subject of Religious Education). The third group, i.e., the Artists, will deal with the illustration of the founding myth in comic form by using the “Cartoon Story Maker” tool. Finally, the fourth group, i.e., the Historians, will search for information on how the founding day of Rome has influenced modern culture (e.g., in 1923, Benito Mussolini proclaimed the “Festival of the Palilia” a national holiday), with a recent quote from the online press as a starting point (“The Eternal City will celebrate its 2,776th birthday on the 21st of April 21, 2023, with historical representations, such as costume parades in the Colosseum and gladiatorial fights in the Circus Maximus. More commonly known as Natale di Roma (Birthday of Rome), the annual celebration of the foundation is based on the establishment of the city, which is said to have been made by Romulus in 753 BC”, retrieved from: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/world/562347994/i-romi-giortazeita-2-776-chronia-tis/>).

#### 2.3.4 5<sup>th</sup> Hour

After completing the activities, each group presents its results to the whole classroom, followed by discourse on the students' reflections regarding the founding myth of Rome, as well as on its implications in the modern world. At the same time, they critically approach the ancient text in conjunction with the printed material (Τοῦτο δὲ ἔλαβε τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ καὶ σύστασιν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ῥωμύλου. “Ὅστις ἐγένετο υἱὸς δίδυμος μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ Ῥώμου τῆς Ῥέας Σιλβίας Ἐστιάκῃς παρθένου ἐκ συνουσίας τοῦ Ἄρεως κατὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὰς γνώμας· οὗτος δὲ ὁ Ῥωμύλος εἰς τὸ δέκατον ὄγδοον ἔτος τῆς ἡλικίας του, ληστρικὸν μεταχειριζόμενος βίον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ποιμένων, ἀποκατέστησε μικρὸν τι πόλισμα ἐπὶ τοῦ Παλλαντίου ὄρους κατὰ τὴν πρώτην τοῦ Μαΐου μηνός τῳ τρίτῳ ἔτει τῆς ἕκτης Ὀλυμπιάδος, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ἀλώσεως τῆς Τρωάδος, ἐάν τις εὔρη τὸ μέσον, ἀφ’ ὅσα παρελάβομεν ἐκ διαφόρων Ἱστορικῶν, ἐπαριθμοῦνται ἕτη τριακόσια ἑννεήκοντα τέσσαρα”, retrieved from: <https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/bz/article/download/3819/3658> (p. 12)), which refers to the founding myth of Rome, seeking differences and similarities between the two texts. Apart from fostering the critical ability of students by practicing on these two texts, it is important that they understand the connection of these two languages through their common themes. Finally, in order to develop the students' empathy, the final topic of discussion will be their own attitude, if they were in Romulus' place, towards Remus, having in mind the adventures they went through as children. The results of all the assignments will be posted by the students on a digital board (Padlet) entitled “The Founding Myth of Rome: Romulus and Remus” to be published in the online school newspaper. In the end, homework is assigned.

#### 2.4 Possible Implications

In the case of distance learning, this teaching scenario will be implemented through a synchronous teaching platform (Webex). At the first stage, the video that serves as a starting point will be shared with the children through the platform's Share Video application. At the teaching stages where the group cooperative learning technique is used, students are divided into groups through Break-out Sessions. At the same time, in the Documents of the asynchronous e-class platform, all the educational material of this teaching will be grouped into categories. The same material will be distributed to the children during the teaching process through the synchronous File sharing platform (webex). Through the Agenda, the teacher will update students on the course of his or her teaching and their assessments. Finally, a Learning Line helps the teacher to present his or her teaching material organized in sections. Finally, the starting-point video will be saved in Multimedia, along with an additional, longer video that they can watch at home. In the Assignments of the eclass, the same assignments that are included in the printed material will be saved, and when students complete them, they can let the teacher know about their progress by sending him or her a screenshot in eclass messages. In both cases of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, a Concept Map will be used in eclass. In particular, through the mindmaker, they will be asked to: a) draw the genealogical tree of Romulus and Remus starting with Aeneas, and b) present diagrammatically 7 kings of Rome (starting with Romulus, its first king).

### 3. Conclusion

Therefore, the use of ICT in teaching Latin is now essential, in order to breathe new life into teaching the subject. This teaching proposal will cause students to enjoy Latin more, connect it with other subjects, develop self-motivation, and foster cooperation towards the acquisition of new knowledge. At the same time, a teacher assumes a more inspirational and encouraging role throughout the teaching process, thus abandoning the

traditional teaching model. In this way, the teaching goals are achieved more efficiently by triggering the students' internal motivation for learning.

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**Appendix**

**HOMEWORK EXERCISES**

1. Please tick, according to the mythological context of the myth, whether the following sentences are True or False:

- A) Romulus was the first king of Rome.
- B) What we know about the founding myth of Rome comes from Latin writers.
- C) The mother of the twin brothers, Remus and Romulus, was Rhea Silvia.
- D) The date of Rome’s foundation is set on April the 21st, 753 BC.
- E) Many versions of the founding myth of Rome have been provided by writers.

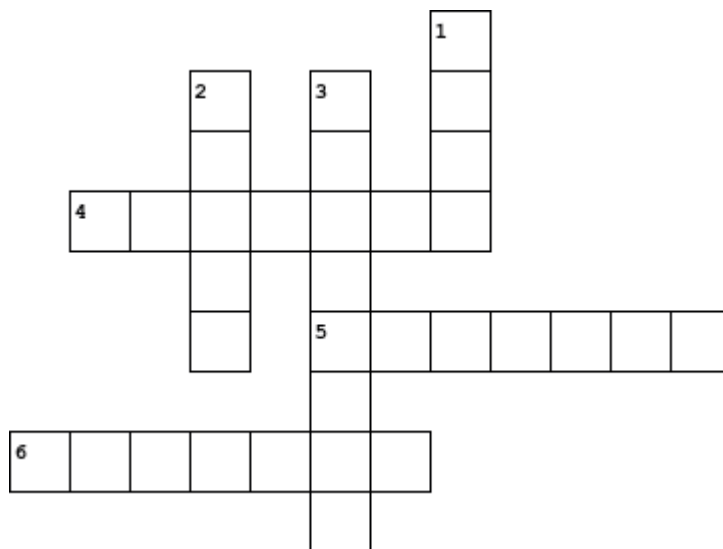
1. Describe the character of Romulus, justifying the traits that you will attribute to him.

2. Complete the following crossword puzzle based on the content of the Latin text provided:

**THE FOUNDING MYTH OF ROME**

**Down**

- 1. According to the text provided, he was the father of the two brothers
- 2. The brother who was killed
- 3. It was on this hill that Romulus decided to found his kingdom



**Across**

- 4. One of Rhea Silvia’s twin sons
- 5. In this river, the two brothers were abandoned
- 6. The animal that raised the two brothers