

bird which was seldom seen and did no harm to cattle or crops, was looked upon as an excellent augury. Word of his success was sent to Romulus, but he capped the story with a better one, saying that twelve vultures had just passed over his hill.

The dispute was still open. Remus had seen the birds first; Romulus had seen the most. Which had won? The question was offered to the decision of their followers, the majority of whom raised their voices in favor of Romulus. The Palatine Hill was therefore chosen as the city's site. This event took place, so Roman chronology tells us, in the year 753 B.C.

The day fixed for the beginning of the work on the new city—the 21st of April—was a day of religious ceremony and festival among the shepherds. On this day they offered sacrifices of cakes and milk to their god Pales, asked for blessings on the flocks and herds, and implored pardon for all offences against the dryads of the woods, the nymphs of the streams, and other deities. They purified themselves by flame and their flocks by smoke, and afterwards indulged in rustic feasts and games. This day of religious consecration was deemed by Romulus the fittest one for the important ceremony of founding his projected city.

Far back in time as it was when this took place, Italy seems to have already possessed numerous cities, many of which were to become enemies of Rome in later days. The most civilized of the Italian peoples were the Etruscans, a nation dwelling north of the Tiber, and whose many cities dis-