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978-1-107-00154-1 - Consuls and Res Publica: Holding High Office in the Roman Republic

Edited by Hans Beck, Antonio Duplá, Martin Jehne and Francisco Pina Polo

Frontmatter

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## CONSULS AND *RES PUBLICA*

The consulate was the focal point of Roman politics. Both the ruling class and the ordinary citizens fixed their gaze on the republic's highest office – to be sure, from different perspectives and with differing expectations. While the former aspired to the consulate as the defining magistracy of their social status, the latter perceived it as the embodiment of the Roman state. Holding high office was thus not merely a political exercise. The consulate prefigured all aspects of public life, with consuls taking care of almost every element of the administration of the Roman state. This multifaceted character of the consulate invites a holistic investigation. The scope of this book is therefore not limited to political or constitutional questions. Instead, it investigates the predominant role of the consulate in, and its impact on, the political culture of the Roman republic.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
 The republic and its highest office: some introductory remarks on the Roman consulate <i>Hans Beck, Antonio Duplá, Martin Jehne and Francisco Pina Polo</i>	 I
 PART I THE CREATION OF THE CONSULSHIP	 17
1 The magistrates of the early Roman republic <i>Christopher Smith</i>	19
2 The origin of the consulship in Cassius Dio's <i>Roman History</i> <i>Gianpaolo Urso</i>	41
3 The development of the praetorship in the third century BC <i>Alexander Bergk</i>	61
 PART II POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CONSULSHIP	 75
4 Consular power and the Roman constitution: the case of <i>imperium</i> reconsidered <i>Hans Beck</i>	77
5 Consuls as <i>curatores pacis deorum</i> <i>Francisco Pina Polo</i>	97
6 The <i>Feriae Latinae</i> as religious legitimation of the consuls' <i>imperium</i> <i>Francisco Marco Simón</i>	116

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978-1-107-00154-1 - Consuls and Res Publica: Holding High Office in the Roman Republic

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
7	War, wealth and consuls <i>Nathan Rosenstein</i>	133
	PART III SYMBOLS, MODELS, SELF-REPRESENTATION	159
8	The Roman republic as theatre of power: the consuls as leading actors <i>Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp</i>	161
9	The consul(ar) as <i>exemplum</i> : Fabius <i>Cunctator</i> 's paradoxical glory <i>Matthew B. Roller</i>	182
10	The rise of the consular as a social type in the third and second centuries BC <i>Martin Jehne</i>	211
11	<i>Privata hospitia, beneficia publica?</i> Consul(ar)s, local elite and Roman rule in Italy <i>Michael P. Fronza</i>	232
	PART IV IDEOLOGY, CONFRONTATION AND THE END OF THE REPUBLICAN CONSULSHIP	257
12	Consular appeals to the army in 88 and 87: the locus of legitimacy in late-republican Rome <i>Robert Morstein-Marx</i>	259
13	<i>Consules populares</i> <i>Antonio Duplá</i>	279
14	The consulship of 78 BC. Catulus versus Lepidus: an <i>optimates</i> versus <i>populares</i> affair <i>Valentina Arena</i>	299
15	Consulship and consuls under Augustus <i>Frédéric Hurlet</i>	319
	<i>Bibliography</i>	336
	<i>Index of persons</i>	368
	<i>Subject index</i>	374

Cambridge University Press

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Edited by Hans Beck, Antonio Duplá, Martin Jehne and Francisco Pina Polo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Preface*

This volume is primarily the result of the work carried out by an international research network, which was established in 2004 with the main purpose of studying the consulship in the Roman republic. The editors formed the core group of this network: Hans Beck (Montreal, Canada), Antonio Duplá (Vitoria, Spain), Martin Jehne (Dresden, Germany) and Francisco Pina Polo (Zaragoza, Spain), the last acting as Principal Investigator. The core group met on various occasions in Spain, and a large international conference was held at the University of Zaragoza in September 2007, where most of the papers presented in this book were delivered. These papers were significantly revised for publication. Other contributions were added as this volume took shape, to fill in the most significant gaps. The result is by no means a comprehensive study of the consulship, let alone a complete one. Rather, we look at the present volume as a contribution to an ongoing debate on Roman republican politics. That debate is more vibrant than ever. Branching out into the realms of other societies in the ancient Mediterranean, we feel that its applied models, concepts and thought paradigms are also relevant to the general discussion of elite power in antiquity.

We are grateful to the Ministerio de Ciencia y Educación of Spain for its sponsorship of two consecutive funding cycles of “Consuls, Consulars and the Government of the Roman Republic” (HUM2004–02449 and HUM2007–60776/HIST), which was vital to the work of our team. When the volume entered the publishing pipeline, Margherita Devine and Brahm Kleinman helped with the challenge of editing the work of scholars from so many different linguistic backgrounds and academic cultures. Special thanks go to them, as to Fabian Knopf, who took on the laborious task of compiling the index of persons. As so often, the editorial work took longer than anticipated, and the editors would like to thank the contributors not

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

viii

*Preface*

only for their willingness to participate, but also for their patience. Finally, we are grateful to Michael Sharp, Commissioning Editor for Classics at Cambridge University Press, for his support and guidance in bringing this publication to light.

Cambridge University Press

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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x

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