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Edited by Harriet I. Flower

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

SECOND EDITION



The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic examines many aspects of Roman history and civilization from 509 to 49 B.C. The key development of the republican period was Rome's rise from a small city to a wealthy metropolis, which served as the international capital of an extensive Mediterranean empire. These centuries produced a classic republican political culture, closely associated with the growth of a world empire. They also witnessed the slow disintegration of republican government under the relentless and combined pressure of external commitments, growing internal dissension, and the boundless ambition of its leading politicians. In the second edition of this *Companion* volume, distinguished European, Canadian, and American scholars present a variety of lively current approaches to understanding the political, military, and social aspects of Roman history, as well as its literary and visual culture. The second edition includes a new introduction, three new chapters on population, slavery, and the rise of empire, and updated bibliographies and maps.

Harriet I. Flower is professor of classics at Princeton University. The author of *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture*, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture*, and *Roman Republics*, she has written on aspects of Roman history and drama, as well as Latin epigraphy.

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HARRIET I. FLOWER

Princeton University



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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107669420

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First edition published 2004

Second edition 2014

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The Cambridge companion to the Roman Republic / [edited by] Harriet I. Flower, Princeton University. – Second edition.

pages cm. – (Cambridge companions to the ancient world)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-03224-8 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-66942-0 (pbk.)

I. Rome – History – Republic, 510-30 B.C. I. Flower, Harriet I. II. Title: Roman Republic.

DG235.C36 2014

937'.02-dc23 2013049901

ISBN 978-1-107-03224-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-66942-0 Paperback

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JÜRGEN VON UNGERN-STERNBERG (Emeritus Chair of Ancient History, Basel University) taught both Greek and Roman history and has published widely in both fields, as well as on the classical tradition. He is especially noted for his two books *Untersuchungen zum spätrepublikanischen Notstandsrecht: senatusconsultum ultimum und hostis-Erklärung* (Munich, 1970) and *Capua im Zweiten Punischen Krieg: Untersuchungen zur römischen Annalistik* (Munich, 1975). He edited (with H. Reinau) *Vergangenheit in mündlicher Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 1988). He has also published on the fall of the Republic, notably: “Die Legitimitätskrise der römischen Republik,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 266 (1998) 607–24. His collected essays can be found in *Römische Studien: Geschichtsbewusstsein – Zeitalter der Gracchen – Krise der Republik* (Munich, 2006).

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PREFACE



I am most grateful to all the contributors for their willingness to participate and their enthusiasm for and support of the project as a whole. I owe special thanks to the following for comments on individual sections and for encouragement along the way: Corey Brennan, Eve D'Ambra, Michael Flower, Dean Hammer, Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, John Marincola, Chris Pelling, and Kathy Spencer. This book would never have been published without Beatrice Rehl of Cambridge University Press, whose tact and good humor saw it through to completion. I also owe a special debt of gratitude to Judith Chien for her expertise and patience in helping me put this volume together. The first edition was edited during the year 2002, first at the School of Historical Studies of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and then at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Both institutions afforded invaluable support that made it all possible.

This second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic*, which marks ten years since the first publication, was suggested by Beatrice Rehl (now publishing and editorial director for humanities and social sciences at Cambridge University Press), to whom I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for her support and friendship. Three new authors (Saskia Hin, Josiah Osgood, and Brent D. Shaw) have contributed substantial and original chapters that make this volume richer and more wide-ranging than the first edition. Once again Judith Chien's careful editing has been invaluable. I would also like to extend special thanks to the Classics Department at Princeton University, as well as to Margaret Andrews, Michael Flower, Isabel Flower, Katharine P. D. Huemoeller, and Dan-el Padilla Peralta.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

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While working on the first edition of *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* in 2004, I came face to face with the complex issues confronting a historian trying to analyze and to teach a time period (now more than 2,000 years in the past) that consists of a grand sweep of history, covering many centuries of dynamic growth and change. What is “the Roman Republic”? How should we approach and characterize this long and multifaceted time period? In this sense, *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* is fundamentally different from other *Cambridge Companions* (more than 500 titles by now), most of which treat discrete topics such as a single century, an individual author, or a single work of literature.

As noted in the introduction to the first edition, because the Latin language does not have words for “the” or “a,” the Romans themselves did not speak of “*the Roman Republic*.” Moreover, the Latin expression *res publica* (from which our word republic is derived) can refer to a broad spectrum of political concepts from a state or commonwealth in general (regardless of its political culture) to a particularly Roman form of government characterized by annual election of magistrates, voting to pass legislation in assemblies of citizens, and equality of these Roman citizens before the law.

When we say “the Roman Republic,” therefore, we make use of a type of convenient short-hand expression employed by later generations to refer in a general way to Rome after the expulsion of the kings (traditional date 509 B.C.) and before the (re)establishment of a system of one-man rule, which was gradually solidified during the time of Augustus (whom we call the first Roman “emperor” but who termed himself simply *princeps* or “leading citizen”). The subsequent “imperial

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period” is easily and inevitably articulated into recognizable subsections by the reigns of individual emperors and their dynasties, whether based on blood relationships or on adoptions that mimicked succession within a biological family. By contrast, the centuries of Republican government are less straightforward in their delineation, whether according to contemporary mentalities or from the vantage of hindsight.

The Romans themselves do not seem to have made much use of any overall dating scheme. They did not even have a clear agreement about the exact moment when their city had been founded (the traditional date cited in most textbooks was suggested by Varro: 753 B.C.). Rather, they referred to each year by the names of the two consuls in office at the beginning of that year, in the specific order in which they had been elected (e.g., in the consulship of Marcus Tullius Cicero and Gaius Antonius Hybrida = the year we call 63 B.C.). Each year was simply another year in which elections continued to produce a republican form of government. This system of consular dating was used daily by the literate elite, for example, to describe the vintage of a wine. Tombstones regularly recorded a precise age at death (but without dates), which suggests a common habit of keeping track of time. Within our own dating system, which was not invented until the end of antiquity, Roman Republican time is all “B.C.,” before our common era, so that counting backwards has become one of the essential tools needed to study Republican Rome.

In 2010 I proposed a new way of conceptualizing Republican Roman history that moves beyond the usual pattern of “early – middle – late” within a single “Roman Republic” (*Roman Republics*; Princeton, 2010). This accepted division is easy to understand but tends to suggest a teleological or biological development that is much neater than actual human experience. It is best to start by acknowledging that any dating scheme is necessarily artificial because it does not reflect the way the Romans thought and wrote about their times. Historical analysis is inevitably based on such retrospective dating patterns because it is very difficult to see exactly what is going on as one is living through the events of each moment.

My new scheme, which proposes breaking up the whole period into multiple republics, is based on two main ideas. To begin with, it is more meaningful to examine history in smaller time periods in order to provide a more nuanced description of change, given that political history in the traditional sense focuses largely on change. Second, it would ultimately be more effective not to have a single scheme of periodization enlisted by all for the study of every aspect of ancient

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Rome (e.g., literature, economics, material culture). Consequently, I am not trying to replace the present accepted pattern of studying Roman history by a single alternative scheme. Rather, I am inviting a more fundamental reexamination of how we use periodization patterns or “time maps,” because these greatly affect both what questions we ask about the past and also what answers to our questions will emerge from our research.

My periodization is summed up in the following chart (all dates are B.C.):

ONE	c. 509–494	A pre-Republican transitional period immediately after a monarchy
TWO	494–451/450	A proto-republic before the first written law code (The Twelve Tables)
THREE	450–367/366	Republic 1: an experiment, including the consular tribunes (boards of executive magistrates instead of two consuls each year)
FOUR	366–300	Republic 2: the emergence of a republic shared by patricians and plebeians
FIVE	300–180	Republic 3: the republic of the <i>nobiles</i> 1 (office-holding élites)
SIX	180–139	Republic 4: the republic of the <i>nobiles</i> 2
SEVEN	139–88	Republic 5: the republic of the <i>nobiles</i> 3
EIGHT	88–81	A transitional period (oligarchy of Cinna, dictatorship of Sulla)
NINE	81–60	Republic 6: the republic of Sulla (modified in significant ways, esp. in 70)
TEN	59–53	A (informal) triumvirate (Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus) with politics dominated by three powerful generals
ELEVEN	52–49	A transitional period
TWELVE	49–44	The dictatorship of Caesar (followed by a brief transition after his murder)
THIRTEEN	43–33	A formal triumvirate (Octavian, Lepidus, Antony), but Lepidus was forced to retire from politics in 36

This framework, which is explicitly based on political criteria, places emphasis on much smaller time periods and thus encourages a move toward micro-history, while also giving attention to crucial

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times of transition between periods, when future directions were not yet determined. Although I myself think that detailed studies of specific time periods often hold the most compelling interest because they conjure up for us experiences of individuals and their communities at a distinct moment in the past, my approach is not meant to discount or dismiss other ways of studying history, including even the macro approach that looks at patterns of human behavior over the millennia (for example, Ian Morris' *The Measure of Civilization: How Social Development Decides the Fate of Nations*; Princeton, 2013). Each methodology will have its own advantages and disadvantages; being aware of them will be decisive in how effectively each can be put to use.

The early period of Roman history remains very difficult to study and almost every possible transition marker is essentially unverifiable. The truly "historical" period of Republican history does not really emerge until the later fourth century B.C. Appius Claudius Caecus (censor 312 B.C.) can be considered the first Roman politician whose life and career we can know about in any detail. Much more evidence survives for events after 264 B.C., from the beginning of the first war with Carthage. This pattern can be linked in obvious ways to the emergence of the first histories of Rome written by Romans in the very late third century B.C. Oral traditions were richer and relatively more detailed for the three generations or so before they were first recorded in written histories. Earlier times were less memorable and could be perceived as less relevant to contemporary society in the late third and early second centuries B.C. Consequently periodization before about 300 B.C. is inevitably a great deal more speculative than after that date.

Some transition moments identified above are, therefore, easier to justify than others. I argue that the sharpest break was the civil war of the 80s B.C. that culminated in the dictatorship of Sulla (whether or not one wants to include the Social War that came immediately before as part of the same civil conflict or as a war fought against an external enemy). In my opinion, the pivotal moment of political transformation was not the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in the 40s, but the earlier conflicts of the 80s B.C. This decade appears as the decisive moment when traditional Republican politics fell apart and was replaced, after years of distinctly un-Republican government and outbreaks of civil war, with Sulla's new constitution. Sulla's political settlement was not a restoration of what had come before but an unprecedented model of republicanism, albeit one that used the same names for political offices and institutions.

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Accepting a watershed around 80 B.C. does not, however, mean that Republican politics came to an end with Sulla. Rather he instituted a “new republic,” one that proved much more unstable than the more traditional political practices of the third and second centuries B.C. Sulla’s successors had various opportunities to reform or to replace his system. Their failure either to make his system work or to come up with a different one is a complex and fascinating story in its own right, but a story that did not have an inevitable or predetermined outcome.

Subsequently, after the dictatorship and murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., the establishment of a system of one-man rule was incremental and slow: Tacitus placed the decisive moment in A.D. 14 with the accession of Tiberius, the first man to succeed to imperial power and to the inheritance of Augustus. Moreover, some Romans, including some very influential figures, are represented as planning for a possible new republic throughout the first century B.C. and beyond. In this sense, the idea of a renewed republic in the Roman imagination did not fade until late January of A.D. 41 (after the murder of Caligula), when the senate debated a restoration of Republican politics (and an erasure of the names of the Caesars!) but soon dropped the whole subject in favor of an argument over who among the men in the room should be the next emperor (Suetonius *Cal.* 56–60, *Claud.* 10, Dio 59.29–60.2.1 and Josephus *AJ* 19.1–273).

* * *

The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic, the first historical volume published in the series about the ancient world, stands out among the others for its treatment of a broader period of history. As noted in the introduction to the first edition, this companion discusses a time span of about 450 years (509–44 B.C.) that saw remarkable changes in the growth of the city of Rome, in its acquisition of an extensive overseas empire, and in what it meant to be a Roman citizen. The issue of who was a Roman citizen changed dramatically, especially once every free person in Italy had acquired this legal status, which also implied a cultural and social identity. Even in this new, expanded second edition, eighteen chapters remain a succinct and crisp treatment of a rich and extensive field of study, and one that has had a decisive impact on the culture and politics of our contemporary world. The reader may also want to consult *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (edited by Karl Galinsky, 2005) for the generation immediately after Caesar’s death and *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* (edited by

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G. R. Bugh, 2006) for complementary and supplementary material from a different perspective. At the moment, scholars in Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand, Israel, and elsewhere are actively engaged in new research projects and are more easily able to communicate both with each other and with a wider public than ever before. As a result, the twenty-first century has made Roman history a great deal more accessible, more interactive, and more fun.

The fifteen essays from the original edition have been corrected and lightly edited by their authors. Important new bibliography for each topic has been added to the bibliography at the end. Three new chapters offer coverage of areas that were not included in 2004, mainly for reasons of space. Josiah Osgood offers a learned and engaging overview of the growth of Roman power and imperialism in the West, a thoughtful complement to Erich S. Gruen's discussion of Rome's presence in the Greek East. Brent D. Shaw has contributed a chapter on slaves and freedmen that provides an original and highly readable introduction to this essential and complex aspect of Roman society. It was the growth of Rome's overseas empire, especially in the second century B.C., that led to the acquisition of huge numbers of slaves, including highly educated individuals whose skills and knowledge transformed Roman culture. The Romans' characteristic habit of offering many slaves a path to citizenship allowed these newcomers to be upwardly mobile within Roman society, even as they changed the composition of the "Roman" population, especially in the city of Rome itself. Saskia Hin has contributed a wide-ranging and thought-provoking essay on demography that examines patterns of mortality, fertility, family structure, disease, and life cycles in Rome and Italy. Shaw and Hin, therefore, each examine in very basic ways who the Romans were and what their lives were like. They employ a range of methodologies from the social sciences, asking questions and finding answers that go beyond what previous generations of ancient historians wrote about.

The decade since the first edition was published has seen a proliferation of handbooks, introductions, and companions of various sorts, designed to make republican Rome available to beginners. The following edited volumes will be of interest to those engaged with matters of Roman republicanism (listed here in order of publication):

Nathan Rosenstein and Robert Morstein-Marx (eds.). 2006. *A Companion to the Roman Republic*. Malden, Mass.

Jörg Rüpke (ed.). 2007. *A Companion to Roman Religion*. Malden, Mass.

Paul Erdkamp (ed.). 2007. *A Companion to the Roman Army*. Malden, Mass.

Miriam Griffin (ed.). 2009. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. Malden, Mass.

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Michael Peachin (ed.). 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*. Oxford.

Beryl Rawson (ed.). 2011. *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden, Mass.

Dexter Hoyos (ed.). 2011. *A Companion to the Punic Wars*. Malden, Mass.

Jane DeRose Evans (ed.). 2013. *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Roman Republic*. Malden, Mass.

Dexter Hoyos (ed.) 2013. *A Companion to Roman Imperialism*. Leiden.

Catherine Steel (ed.) 2013. *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*. Cambridge.

Paul Erdkamp (ed.). 2013. *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*. Cambridge.

The present volume does not aim to reproduce a narrative history or a comprehensive overview of all the themes of interest to contemporary scholars working on Republican Rome. Recent textbooks that include useful discussions of the Republican Period within broader considerations of Roman history are by Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert (*The Romans: From Village to Empire*; Oxford, 2004) and by David S. Potter (*Ancient Rome: A New History*; New York, 2009).

For more detailed narrative treatments of Republican history, readers may wish to consult the following works:

Christopher S. Mackay. 2004. *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*. Cambridge.

Klaus Bringmann. 2007. *A History of the Roman Republic*. Malden, Mass.

Christopher S. Mackay. 2009. *The Breakdown of the Roman Republic: From Oligarchy to Empire*. Cambridge.

Nathan Rosenstein. 2012. *Rome and the Mediterranean 290 to 146 BC: The Imperial Republic*. Edinburgh.

Catherine Steel. 2013. *The End of the Roman Republic 146 BC to 44 BC: Conquest and Crisis*. Edinburgh.

Guy Bradley. forthcoming. *Early Rome to 290 BC: The Beginnings of the City and the Rise of the Republic*. Edinburgh.

For the most compact overview, see David M. Gwynn, *The Roman Republic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2012). Meanwhile, Josiah Osgood (*Caesar's Legacy: Civil War and the Emergence of the Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 2006) and Kathryn Welch (*Magnus Pius: Sextus Pompeius and the Transformation of the Roman Republic*; Lampeter, 2012) have put the fascinatingly and fantastically complicated years immediately after the murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. (and the sources for this period) in a whole new light. Until recently this time of transition was still very much dominated by the interpretations of Sir Ronald Syme's *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939).

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The memory of Republican Rome developed by ancient Romans themselves has been brought into much sharper focus in two important studies by Alain Gowing (*Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture*; Cambridge, 2005) and Andrew Gallia (*Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics, and History under the Principate*, Cambridge, 2012).

Of related interest is Andrew Feldherr's invaluable *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians* (Cambridge, 2009), as well as Mariah Yarrow's *Historiography at the End of the Republic: Provincial Perspectives on Roman Rule* (Oxford, 2006). Andrew Lintott (*Cicero as Evidence: A Historian's Companion*, Oxford, 2008) explains how to read Cicero's various works from the point of view of an historian.

Very many literary texts from Republican Rome only survive in quotations or excerpts, known as fragments. As far as newly presented sources are concerned, the recently published (first) English edition of the fragments of the Roman historical writers will be essential in making this scattered material more easily accessible to nonspecialist readers (Tim Cornell, *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*; Oxford, 2013). In a related initiative, a new research project at the University of Glasgow is aiming to reedit and translate the fragments of the Roman orators (<http://www.fro.gla.ac.uk/>). New editions of poetical and dramatic texts include Adrian S. Hollis *Fragments of Roman Poetry, c. 60 BC–AD 20*, Oxford 2007, Markus Schauer, *Tragicorum romanorum fragmenta*, Vol. 1: *Livius Andronicus; Naevius; Tragicci minores; Fragmenta adespota* (Göttingen, 2012) and Gesine Manuwald, *Tragicorum romanorum fragmenta II: Ennius* (Göttingen, 2012). Two further volumes in this series are in preparation.

Overall, Gesine Manuwald's *Roman Republican Theater* (Cambridge, 2011) affords the best access to the lost world of tragedy, comedy, and historical plays that Romans watched on the many festival days in their calendar. Callie Williamson (*The Laws of the Roman People: Public Law in the Expansion and Decline of the Roman Republic*, Ann Arbor, MI, 2005) provides a recent treatment of the legal sources and traditions for this earliest period in the history of Roman law. Alison Cooley's *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy* (Cambridge, 2012) offers the most up-to-date and accessible introduction to the world of Latin inscriptions.

In addition, electronic resources have become much more numerous over the last decade; from interactive maps to ancient texts to archaeological reports many websites now offer material that is reliably up-to-date and of high quality. The following brief guide is offered by way of introduction (but much more is clearly to come soon).

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A FEW ESSENTIAL AND USEFUL DIGITAL
RESOURCES

Professional Organizations

American Philological Association, soon to be called the Society for Classical Studies: Main professional organization in North America for the field of classics, including ancient history: www.apaclassics.org

Association of Ancient Historians: <http://associationofancienthistorians.org/>

Archaeological Institute of America: Main professional organization in North America for the field of archaeology: www.archaeological.org

Bibliography

**L'Année Philologique*: Main index to the scholarship of classical studies: www.annee-philologique.com

Bryn Mawr Classical Review: Open access reviews of recent publications in classics and archaeology: bmc.brynmawr.edu

**Oxford Bibliographies Online*: Research guide for the ancient world divided by subject: www.oxfordbibliographies.com

Reference

**Oxford Classical Dictionary*: Encyclopedia covering the Greco–Roman world available through Oxford Reference: www.oxfordreference.com

*Brill's New Pauly: Concise encyclopedia of the Classical world: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly?fromBrillOnline=true>

History

*Cambridge Ancient Histories: History of the Greco–Roman world in downloadable chapters available through *Cambridge Histories Online*: universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories

Diotima: Resources for the study of women and gender in the Greco–Roman world: www.stoa.org/diotima

* Subscription currently required to access all content.

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Art

(See also the bibliography for the chapter on Roman art p. 457–460)

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