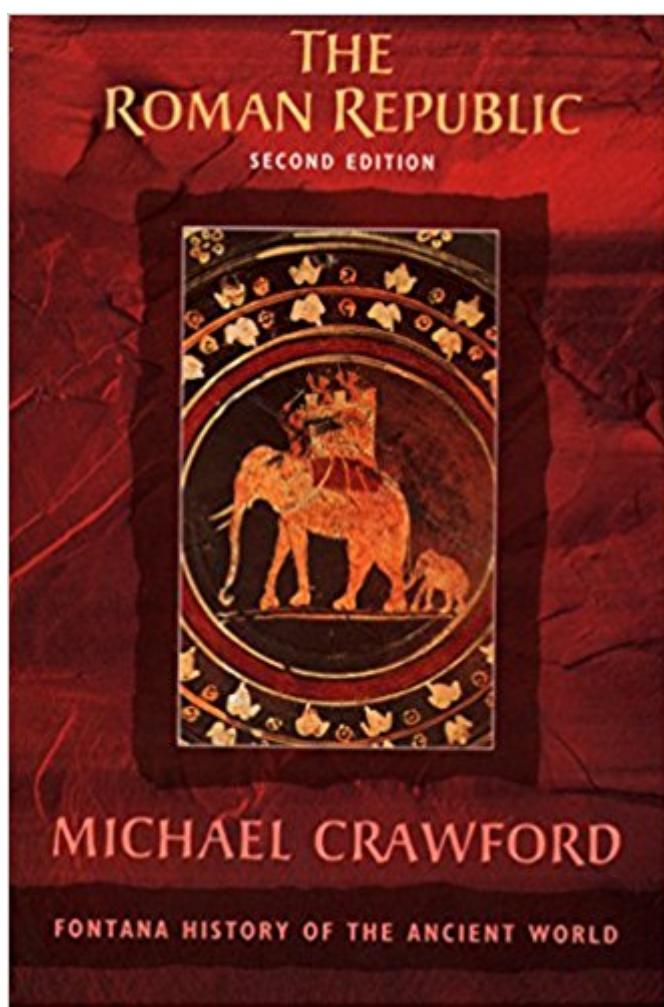


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The Roman Republic (Fontana History Of The Ancient World)



Synopsis

Between the Sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 BC and the middle of the second century BC, a part-time army of Roman peasants, under the leadership of the ruling oligarchy, conquered first Italy and then the whole of the Mediterranean. The loyalty of these marauding heroes, and of the Roman population as a whole, to their leaders was assured by a share in the rewards of victory, rewards which became steadily less accessible as the empire expanded → promoting a decline in loyalty of cataclysmic proportions. Wars, rural impoverishments, civil discord and slavery are a few of the subjects covered in this study.

Book Information

File Size: 1431 KB

Print Length: 256 pages

Publisher: Fontana Press; 2nd edition (June 18, 2015)

Publication Date: June 18, 2015

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00XTKG53E

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #8,299 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #3 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Ancient Civilizations > Rome #8 in Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Rome #63 in Books > History > Europe

Customer Reviews

I was not overly fond of this book. I had high hopes for this work because Crawford is also a specialist in Republican coinage, and his numismatic works are first rate. Crawford gives a cursory tour of the Republic, with most of his emphasis on the Gracchi tribunates, which he refers to in many of the earlier chapters, before reaching the period in question. In early chapters, he refers to later events without more detail on the chronology, and in later chapters he jumps from transformative event to event with no real analysis or consistency. He also only lightly covers how

the government was structured, which significantly impacted the development of empire. That was my biggest frustration; I'm familiar with the chronology, but the book is structured very loosely on chronology and not very well structured thematically, either. This left significant gaps in what is supposed to be a history of the Roman Republic. I was surprised that little space was spent on the Punic Wars, which were defining events for Rome, especially the Second Punic War. Crawford also bemoans the lack of sources, or their reliability, throughout the book. The book's strength lies in Crawford's description of the relations between the Roman oligarchy and the lower classes, but even this was not fully developed, and was a one-sided examination, at best. The book is too analytical for a general reader and not well organized or detailed enough for the historian/classicist.

Many of the reviews express dissatisfaction with the organization of the work. My knowledge of Rome is rudimentary at best, but I found this work engaging and the organization grouped similar thoughts together. As long as you are not expecting a chronologically-organized work and are rather looking for a broad overview of the republic, this work will be worth the time it takes to read.

Surprisingly relevant to current politics and social mores. The ideas offered about laws aggravating the problems they seek to solve through self interest distortions could be applied equally well to today. It's scary, I think as the book means it to be.

I just finished this book earlier today and I don't understand why there are so many haters out there when it comes to this remarkable book! It must be taken for what it is, and that is a great introduction to Roman Republican history. I see no reason why one would want to denigrate this book. The author cites many of his sources, even going so far as to deify PA Brunt, a phenomenal scholar in his own right. Nevertheless, this book does stand on its own. Read it and you won't (Shouldn't Be Dissapointed).I highly reccomend it for its authentic and precise looks at Roman history pre-imperial Rome. To me there are few books that are on its level. Indeed, I plan to buy the sister book The Roman Empire, ASAP. My only complaint/quibble is the omission of Crassus's fate. Crawford mentions the Triumvirate, but does not go into too much detail on how they ruled day to day in Rome (Pompeius, Caesar, Crassus). Crassus was in fact slain in a campaign against the Parthians (A Campaign He Was Not Authorized To Engage In By The Senate). But this is not mentioned in the book. Nevertheless, it is ironic that all three men would be dead within a decade of one another. Thus Rome lost three of its greatest statesmen at a time when they were sorely

needed. I highly recommend this work. A true historian with an open mind will not be disappointed. A. Nathaniel Wallace, Jr.

At 200 short pages I thought this would be a nice introduction to the history of the Roman Republic. An introduction it was not. I am sure it is well-written for its audience, but the author assumes his reader already possesses an extensive knowledge of the republic, which makes me wonder why you would then want to read it. It is too subtle even for the thoroughly educated literati (did I use that word correctly?). Anyway, I bought the book, so by gosh, I read it! More seriously, the title and notes on the back are terribly misleading. Somewhere the notes need to convey that the book is intended only for specialists. A new title is in order: "Scholarly Reflections on the Roman Republic," perhaps?

Michael Crawford's book is not for the novice. Those unfamiliar with the chronology of the Roman Republic will find his analysis confusing, as Crawford assumes his reader has considerable background in Republican Roman history and culture. For those with a decent hold on the events of the Republic, Crawford's keen analytical text is highly worthwhile. He examines the relationship between members of the Roman oligarchy, discusses the successful consolidation of Italy, examines the conquest of the provinces and its effect on Roman politics, and finally deals with the political destabilization that led to the rise of warlords such as Marius, Pompey, and Caesar. His book is part of an essential bibliography for any Classics major or Roman history buff.

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