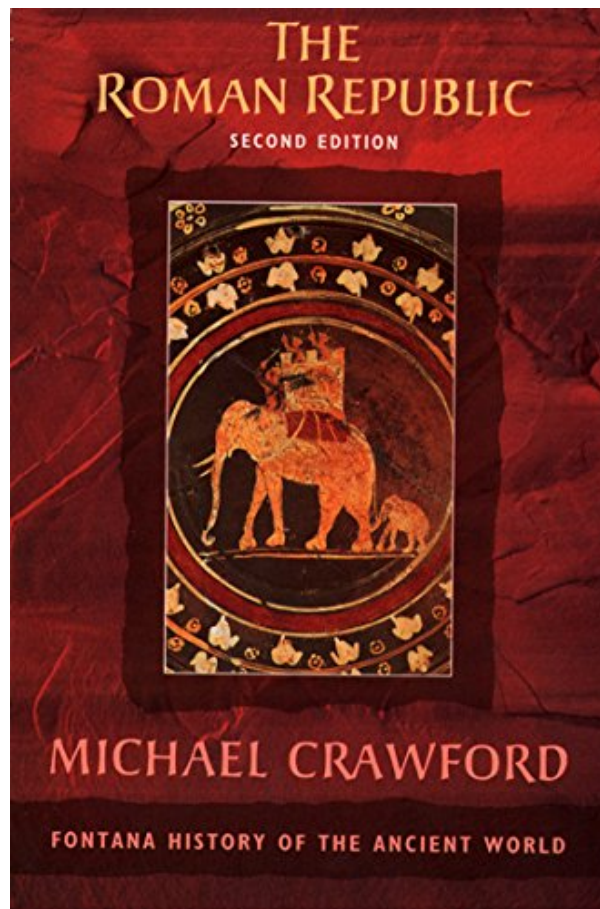
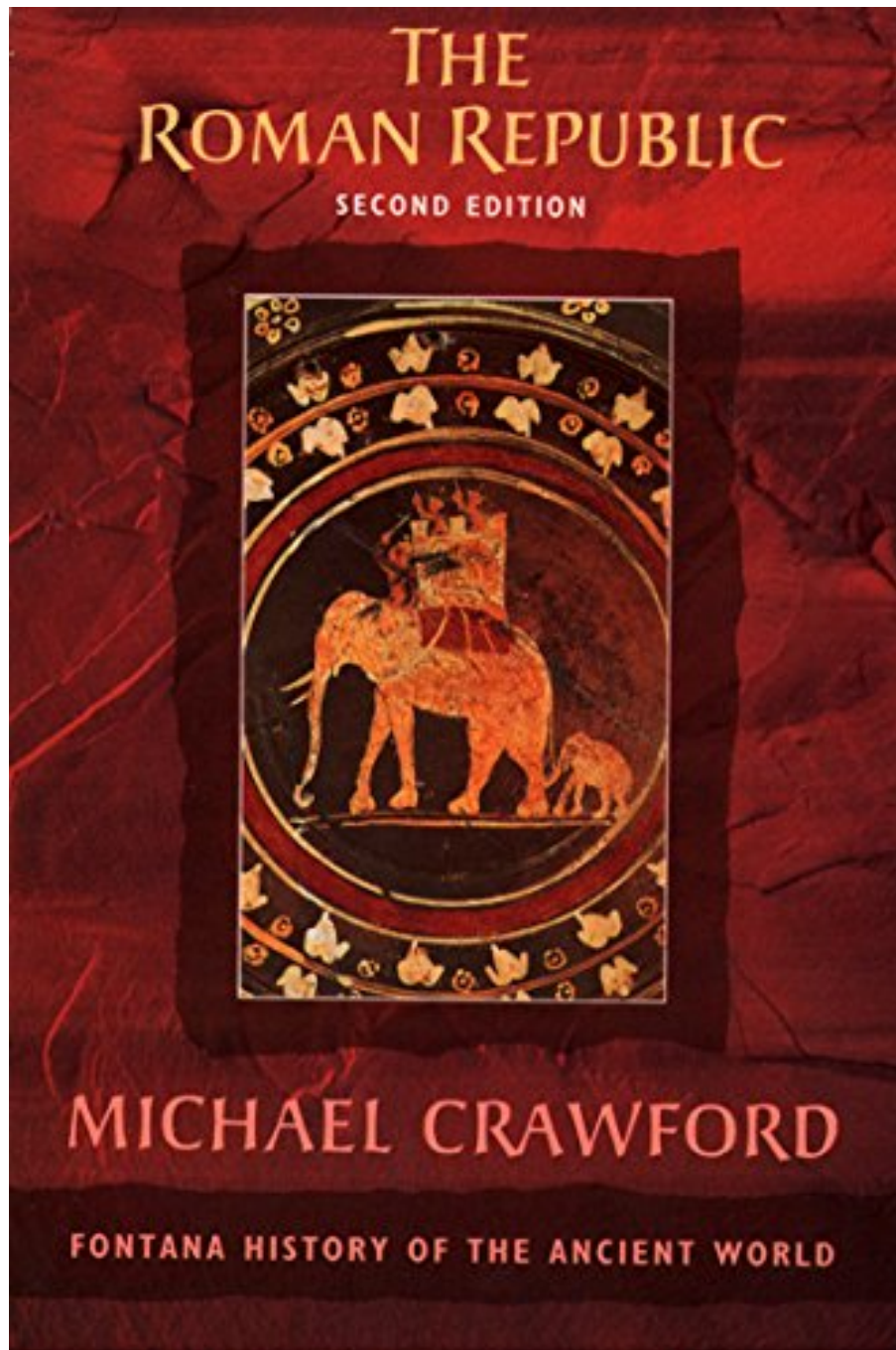


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HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD) BY
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Review

During the centuries of its history the republic burst its city-state shell... Wars, rural impoverishment, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few families, civil discord, the increase in number of slaves and robbery of overseas provinces caused irreversible changes... This is the material of Crawford's study. He handles its complexities with acuteness and balance. He is sophisticated about political motives and economic causes... Crawford's readable book is a fine contribution to the understanding of this important period. (Times Higher Education Supplement)

Well-informed, lively.. The work conveys a remarkable quantity of information... Students will benefit greatly from Crawford's obvious enthusiasm for historical research and for finding explanations of complex phenomena. (Journal of Roman Studies)

About the Author

Michael Crawford is Professor of History, University College, London.

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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.

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Most helpful customer reviews

45 of 48 people found the following review helpful.

Too spartan for a novice, irrelevant for an expert

By A Customer

I was extremely disappointed with this book. It might just be useful as a supplemental college text, in a class in which multiple primary materials are read along with additional secondary material and which has a fine professor. Otherwise, its gaps, disjointed organization, and assumptions can be quite irritating for the reader. Don't even bother if you are not acquainted with ancient history. If you are, this book is more likely to leave you frustrated than informed. The author makes an implicit assumption that the reader is familiar with Latin

(I am, but he didn't know that), and organizes the material neither chronologically nor thematically but a hybrid of each in which thematic chapters alternate with chronological ones. This would work except that the themes refer partly to the chapter before and partly to the chapter following which I found cumbersome. Major events such as the Punic Wars are handled in a cursory fashion, and little to no attention is paid to the acquisition and government of the provinces. Rome is repeatedly referred to as an oligarchy without once examining what that means. Lastly, the author covers much of the omissions with flat statements about the unreliability of existing sources (e.g. Plutarch) without discussing why, or to what extent. Instead, the reader is treated to the author's unexplained theories, and much rectitude concerning their superiority over others. Avoid this book unless you have literally read everything else on the subject and still haven't had enough.

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Res Publica

By Michael Taylor

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.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

For post-doctoral specialists in the classics only.

By Federal Farmer

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?

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