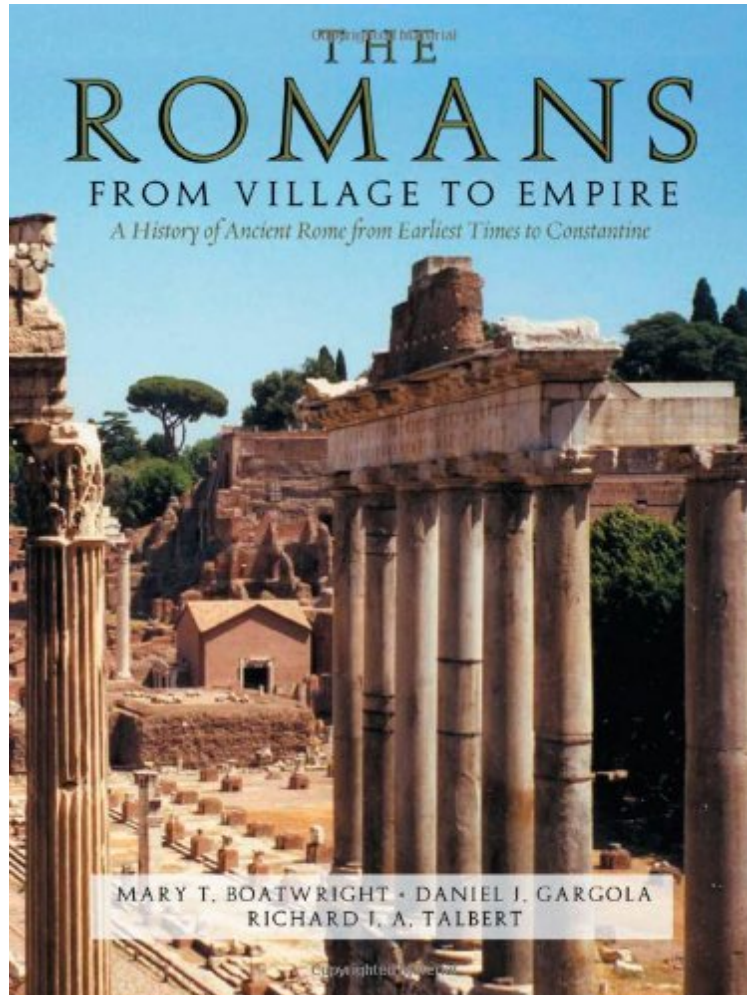


The Romans: From Village to Empire

Von *Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, Richard J. A. Talbert*
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before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Romans: From Village to Empire:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A solid introductionVon FrKurt Messick'The Romans: From Village to Empire' is a new book by the Oxford University Press meant to be a companion to their earlier volume on the Greek civilisation. This text, written by scholars Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J.A. Talbert, in intended for several audiences - those with a general interest in history, beginning undergraduate students in historical survey courses, those with interest in archaeology, culture, and military events, and those who want a better understanding of the secular and sacred empire that preceded but gave rise to the current world of Christendom and European nation-states. The book is not one that is heavy on

details, but is very well documented and annotated, with pictures, maps and drawings complementing most pages. Maps are generously provided throughout, including maps on the front and back binding pages. The authors do not limit themselves to a particular historical method - sometimes the events will be seen primarily through the biographical sketches of particular people (there are some historical periods for which the only surviving text evidence is later biographical writing about key figures), sometimes the events will be recreated through interpretation of archaeological finds, and sometimes on analogy and speculation based on other contemporary settlements and writers, although not Roman. The authors make clear at many points in the text that our textual evidence is most certainly a biased report - historians in the ancient world did not strive to write objective history as it is considered today, but rather often wrote with a specific intention, often the glorification of Rome or some family or person in Rome. The authors cite the Greek influence on Roman historical production - there were three primary ways to write a history: one, concentrate on a particular significant event or person; two, write a complete history of the city from its foundation to the present; and three, write a comprehensive history of the whole known world. Most Roman historians opted for the first two; the histories of founding-to-present done by different hands at different times highlights the difficulty of working with history, when events are so far removed from the author's time. The conflicting and contradictory tales of Rome's early days only add to the frustration of knowing the history before the Republic and Empire. Rome did at one point have a king - the authors list the seven kings according to Varro's list, including their dates (Romulus, from 753 BC to Tarquin, who died in 510 BC). These dates and identities are far from uncontroversial, as are the figures who follow. Some consuls, tribunes and other leaders are well-known names because of the significant events and accomplishments with which their names are attached, but the political instability of a growing city-state with (for most of this early history) strict safeguards against tyranny that include one-year, usually non-renewable terms of office make for a confusing narrative. There were more likely more consuls in Rome during any particular century from the end of the kingly era to the time of Julius Caesar than there have been Monarchs of Britain and Presidents of the United States combined. Add to this confusion that they often came from the same inter-related families and thus bore the same names, and one gets a huge task of unraveling the historical record. Boatwright, Gargola and Talbert are to be given great credit for seeing through the task of making the text not only understandable, but enjoyable. In their thirteen chapters, they trace an historical pattern in chronological order, devoting each chapter to a period roughly 50 - 100 years in length. The first chapter looks at the state of early Italy generally, with its indigenous populations (Etruscans, Latins, Campanians, etc.) as well as the colonisers (Greeks, Phoenicians, etc.). The second chapter deals with the beginnings of urbanisation and the formation of city-states, including the early shift from kingdom to republican form of government for Rome. Rome's expansion beyond its own territory, beyond the Latin province and beyond Italy is described not as an inevitable march, but rather one of fits and starts, with set-backs and improbable happenings. How Rome's influence as an imperial power rather than simply as a conqueror in various parts of the Mediterranean world is also described in good detail. Wherever possible, the authors have brought in information about the various classes and orders of people, both in Rome, in Roman communities outside of Rome, and in provinces and subject states, to show the importance and the concerns for the plebs, the 'ordinary' citizens (and often non-citizens) of the city and empire. One will learn about the key issues here (the Punic Wars, Augustus' consolidation, Diocletian's Tetrarchy, etc.), key individuals (Sulla, Pompey, Augustus, Hadrian, etc.), and general trends (the rise and decline of the Senate, the uneasy balance of religion and secular concerns from the start, etc.) - one will also learn new things here, often overlooked in histories that concentrate just on the powerful and 'most noteworthy' people. The book is well indexed, useful and thorough. The appendix material also includes a brief glossary/biography listing of principle ancient authors, a general glossary of terminology, and a twenty-page timeline following four primary strands: West, East, Rome Italy, and Cultural Other Landmarks. While the timeline begins with the emergence of agriculture in 4000 BC (the authors use the BC - AD designation rather than the more general BCE - CE form), it really begins in earnest about 1000 - 750 BC, with the foundation of cities, including Rome, Carthage, and other city-states. The authors also use pull-quote boxes to draw original source material quotations to support the general historical narrative being presented, which is very effective in its presentation.

Kurzbeschreibung How did a single village community in the Italian peninsula eventually become one of the most powerful imperial powers the world has ever known? In *The Romans: From Village to Empire*, Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel Gargola, and Richard J.A. Talbert explore this question as they guide readers through a comprehensive sweep of Roman history, ranging from the prehistoric settlements to the age of Constantine. Vividly written and accessible, *The Romans* traces Rome's remarkable evolution from village, to monarchy, to republic, and eventually to one-man rule by an emperor whose power at its peak stretched from Scotland to Iraq and the Nile Valley. Firmly grounded in ancient literary and material sources, the book describes and analyzes major political and military landmarks, from the Punic Wars, to Caesar's conquest of Gaul and his crossing of the Rubicon, to the victory of Octavian over Mark Antony, and to Constantine's adoption of Christianity. It also introduces such captivating individuals as Hannibal,

Mithridates, Pompey, Cicero, Cleopatra, Augustus, Livia, Nero, Marcus Aurelius, and Shapur. The authors cover issues that still confront modern states worldwide, including warfare, empire building, consensus forging, and political fragmentation. They also integrate glimpses of many aspects of everyday Roman life and perspective--such as the role of women, literature, entertainment, town-planning, portraiture, and religion--demonstrating how Rome's growth as a state is inseparable from its social and cultural development. Ideal for courses in Roman history and Roman civilization, *The Romans* is enhanced by almost 100 illustrations, more than 30 maps (most produced by the Ancient World Mapping Center), and 22 textual extracts that provide fascinating cultural observations made by ancient Romans themselves.

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