



ROBERT B. KEBRIC

ROMAN PEOPLE

THIRD EDITION



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Robert B. Kebric

University of Louisville



Mayfield Publishing Company

Mountain View, California

London • Toronto

*In memory of Burt M. Kebric
and Florence Hamilton Kebric*

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On the half-title page: Messalina, the teenaged wife of the Emperor Claudius, holding their child, Britannicus (Louvre, Paris).

Chapter openers: The coin shown on the chapter opening pages is a silver denarius (43–42 B.C.) of Brutus, issued to commemorate Caesar's assassination. See Figure 3.7 for the reverse side. One of the most famous Roman coins, there are fewer than 60 known examples. Photograph by Karen A. Peters; courtesy of Harlan J. Berk, Ltd.

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Preface

The Individual in History

People make up societies, comprise civilizations. We may formulate and embrace as many theories and compile as many timetables or lists of significant events as we wish to help us understand the past, but we must always return to the simple reality that people are at the foundation of our inquiries.

So often in studies of eras before our own, people have been forced into the background, assigned a role secondary to theories and events. Their humanness has been forgotten. We tend to race over their names—especially if they sound or appear foreign—to discover what happened. Who they were as individuals within the context of their own times has mostly gone unnoticed.

No “great people” theory or biographical approach to history is being argued here. There have, of course, always been the Caesars and the Constantines; they are too closely tied to the events of their times not to have been given extensive coverage. But most modern texts have developed little more than their political *personas*, and as for the less prominent individuals in ancient society, we have seldom heard of them at all. Characters of lesser note are nonetheless still important for whatever contribution they made to their society. The study of people

from many walks of life adds depth to our understanding of the ancient Romans and, ultimately, of ourselves.

Audience and Approach

Roman People should prove a useful alternative to more traditional event-and-theory books. It is another option for those who enjoy the positive response usually evoked by the biographies of Plutarch and Suetonius and who have had previous success with *Greek People*, the companion to this volume, and the few other modern works that have emphasized people.

Intended for anyone interested in ancient Roman society, *Roman People* attempts to present some ancient Romans as they were, not cardboard figures who lived in a past so distant that it seems they could never have any meaning for us today. The general historical background necessary to understand developments in antiquity is provided, but the emphasis is on people. The choice of the men and women presented here is necessarily limited. Our knowledge of the past extends only as far as our surviving sources allow. Some names will be familiar; others will be more obscure. Interestingly, many of the most memorable figures in Roman

history were not Romans at all. Through war or politics—or because they resided, by force or free will, within Rome's Empire—they became indelibly linked with Rome. Several of these “Romans” are also discussed.

Some eras provide more interesting personalities than others. It can be a challenge to match the peculiar circumstances of a particular period with an individual (or individuals) who might best represent some historical or cultural aspect of that period. Because of the long history of Rome, it is especially difficult to provide a successful balance of personalities and continuity. Also, Rome *was* a political society, and discussion of prominent politicians is both inevitable and desirable. Rome provided some of the most fascinating political figures in history. Nonetheless, individuals have been included who illustrate some aspect of human activity or behavior that might have been neglected or only touched upon in more general works. The resultant cross section of people should provide a better understanding of Roman life and the “Roman personality.”

Many quotations and extracts from ancient writers—sometimes the subjects themselves—have been incorporated so that the people, as much as possible, can tell their own stories. Numerous maps and illustrations, a chronological table, and a glossary and pronunciation guide also make *Roman People* a more useful book.

A Concluding Observation

When human beings began to keep track of themselves, the question they first asked was “Who am I?” and then, “What did I do?” Their own individual existence was foremost in their thoughts. In our complex and, some would say, impersonal society, the “doing” often seems to

take precedence over the “being.” *Roman People* tries to keep both in mind—the person *and* his or her accomplishments. It offers the lives and the world of a few people from the distant past in the hope that the gulf of years that separates us from the people of Ancient Rome will begin to diminish.

The Second Edition and Acknowledgments

I welcome the opportunity to prepare a second edition of *Roman People* because the book has been well received and has achieved a wide audience.

Inevitably, the modern publishing process and all its ramifications contributes to error, and I have attempted to correct, revise, or add to any portion of the text that needed such, remaining grateful to those who pointed out any oversight by me or the publisher. The readings at the ends of chapters have been enlarged significantly and reflect the most recent work. An expanded illustration program with many new photos further complements the book's specific content and should increase reader interest. A geographical map of Italy has been added to the map selection, and all maps have been redrawn. New material on women, the family, Roman views on multiculturalism, the Etruscans, the Roman baths, and weather at Rome has also been incorporated. The revised book should, like the new edition of *Greek People*, remain a viable resource through the turn of the century.

I reiterate my appreciation to Professors Thomas W. Africa, Erich S. Gruen, and Frank W. Walbank for reading the original draft of *Roman People*, and to the reviewers of the first edition. Thanks go as well to my previous editor, Lansing Hays; and to Bill Karlen, whose

photographic work herein helps to preserve his memory. Special thanks go to users of the first edition. For the second edition, I would like to express my gratitude once again to Professor Walbank, who, as usual, is always ready and willing to spend the time to comment on and encourage a colleague's work; to the following people who reviewed the manuscript for Mayfield: Richard C. Frey, Southern Oregon State College; R. L. Hohlfelder, University of Colorado at Boulder; Timothy Long, Indiana University; C. Renaud, Carthage College; and C. A. Sneddon, University of Utah; to Dennis Korbylo for additional photographic work; to Mayfield Publishing Company for the opportunity to revise *Roman People*; to my editor, Holly Allen, who has overseen the preparation of the new edition; to April Wells-Hayes, my production editor; and, especially, to my wife, Judith Kebric, for her assistance and continued interest in my work.

I am grateful to the various authors, presses, museums, and other photo sources for their permission to use copyrighted material. Specific acknowledgments for translations and the full references for all photos, maps, and other illustrations are listed at the end of the book.

Finally, I wish to thank all the others who in some way assisted me in the preparation of *Roman People*.

The Third Edition and Acknowledgments

Recently, while the downstairs of our house was being finished, I mentioned to the carpenter, Jim Lund, that he had done such a good job that he should "sign" his work somewhere. To my surprise, he answered that he already had—

inside the casing of one of the ceiling beams he had constructed. He also said he had written the date, mentioned the weather, and left a dollar bill in it. When I asked him why he had done so, he replied that when the house was remodeled or torn down in the future (the not too-near future, I hope!), the person doing the work would know he was the one who had built it, the date, and what kind of day it was and would also have something personal of his from the time to hold. He then told me that he began the practice because when he was young, he used to accompany his father, also a carpenter, on his projects. Whenever they did remodeling jobs in older neighborhoods on houses built in the early part of the century, they would find the same kind of messages. He said he was fascinated to find the name of a carpenter like himself from the 1920s, or that on a particular date the weather had been "sunny," or a penny or nickel put there by someone now long dead. In that manner, he added with a touch of emotion, he felt a kinship with that person and that his profession was literally being passed down from generation to generation by craftspeople who had preceded him. Now he wanted to be remembered in the same way fifty or seventy-five years down the road. I told him that without really knowing it, he was enacting what history is really all about: who I am, what I did, and how I pass on information about my own time to those in the future. I can think of no more apt example to convey, simply, what history is all about than this one that just "fell into my lap." People seem to have the idea that the study of history is something separate from what they do every day—when in fact, like Jim, they are exercising the historical process with everything they do. It was with this kind of thought in mind that I originally set out to write this volume, and

I am gratified that it continues to attract new readers and keep previous ones interested. I am pleased to prepare this third edition.

I have added new sections on Roman women, including Nero's mother, Agrippina, who was murdered by her conniving son, and a birthday invitation sent from one friend to another while living a rather monotonous life on the Roman frontier in north Britain as wives of officers stationed there. Pliny's loving and thorough description of his villa, Josephus' eyewitness account of a Roman imperial military triumph, and comments about the millennium, Dionysius Exiguus, and time-reckoning complete the major text additions. I have also added new photographic material, much of it about women, and recent supplemental bibliography, which has been appended to the existing bibliographical sections.

Most of those who have assisted me in the past with the creation and production of this

volume have already been mentioned in previous prefaces. I thank them again and express my appreciation. I would also like to add specific thanks to Professor Gerald E. Kadish for advice on Egyptian-related material and Professor Arthur J. Slavin and Professor Kerry E. Spiers for their input and help over the years. I mention Glenn Bugh, Virginia Technical Institute and State University; Kevin Carroll, Arizona State University; Robert L. Hohlfelder, University of Colorado at Boulder, and Myra Levin, Towson State University, as new readers for this edition and am grateful for their input. I also wish to thank Nikki Lewis and Gene Johnson for their assistance in preparing additional photographs. I remain indebted to the various authors, presses, museums, and all others who have contributed in some way to the success of this work—especially my wife, Judith.



Contents

Preface v
Illustrations, Maps, and Charts xii
Chronology xvi

Chapter 1

Rome, Expansion, and Conquest 1
**The Siege of Syracuse (213–211 B.C.)—
Marcellus the War-Lord, Archimedes the
Weapons-Master**
Horatius at the Bridge 13
Gauls and Geese—Camillus Saves Rome 16
A Worthy Opponent—Hannibal Takes
His Revenge 19
Ancestors and Anecdotes. What Price Glory?—
Polybius Provides Some Insight into the
Roman Mentality: A Blueprint for Success
for Roman Youth 31

Chapter 2

The Republic in Transition 36
**Internal Disorders—Eunus the Magician and
the First Sicilian Slave War (135–132 B.C.)**
Cornelia—A Political Mother 38
Larcus Macedo—A Master Is Murdered by
His Slaves 43
Spartacus Ravages Italy 51

Chapter 3

*Politics and Violence in the First
Century B.C.* 57
**Gambling with Rome's Future—Brutus
the Assassin**
The Man Who Came to Dinner—Cicero
Entertains Caesar 66
Dolabella—A Concerned Son-in-Law Offers
Advice to Cicero before Pharsalus 68
An Assassin's Wife—Porcia Makes Her
Point 70
Caesar and Multiculturalism. "Scarecrows,"
"Lions," and "Tinmen"—A Different
Kind of Oz: Vercingetorix the Gaul,
Ariovistus the German, and Cassivellaunus
the Briton 80

Chapter 4

The End of the Republic 87
**Antony Loses the Roman World—Cleopatra,
"Queen of Kings"; Queen of Hearts**
Fulvia—A Lioness among Lions 98
The Reluctant Tourist: Boats, Mules, and
Misery—Horace Takes a Trip 101
Through "Thick and Thin"—Turia,
a Devoted Wife 119

Chapter 5

The Early Empire 122

**Tiberius' Troubled Reign (14–37 A.D.)—
Thrasylus the Astrologer**

Trimalchio—A Literary Caricature of the
“Neighborhood Astrologer” 131

A “Divine” Indiscretion—The Seduction
of Paulina 133

Julia: The Star-Crossed Daughter 135

Cremutius Cordus—An Innocent Victim? 140

Philoe—A Horoscope from 150 A.D. 145

Chapter 6

*Flavian Stability—Natural
Disaster* 148

**Mt. Vesuvius Destroys Pompeii and
Herculaneum (August 24, 79 A.D.)—
Pliny the Survivor**

Profit over Safety—Atilius the Fight-Promoter
Spawns Disaster 150

Eyewitness to History—Josephus Describes a
Roman Triumph 153

Apicius' Guide for the Roman Gourmet 165

The Case of Petronia Vitalis—Vesuvius Lays
Down the Law 175

“Home Sweet Home”—Pliny Describes His
Villa 178

Chapter 7

The Golden Age of Empire 185

**Growing Old in the Second Century A.D.—
Spurinna, an Aged Roman**

Verginius Rufus Suffers a Fall 192

Ummidia Quadratilla—An Excessive
Grandmother's Affection 193

Old Domitius Gets the “Last Laugh” 194

An Anonymous Ghost 196

A Frontier Birthday in Roman Britain—Claudia
Severa Sends an Invitation to Her Friend 200

A Golden Wedding Anniversary—Pythion and
Epicdilla 202

The Roman Baths—Lucian Takes a Dip 204

Chapter 8

Empire and Army 209

**Septimius and the Severan Dynasty
(193–235 A.D.)—Julia Domna the
Syrian Empress**

Anirate Student Writes Home 221

Baebius Marcellinus—A Terminal Case
of Baldness 228

Bulla the Bandit—A Not-So-Common
Thief 230

Aurelian Draws a Queen—Zenobia of
Palmyra 239

Chapter 9

Crisis and Christians 243

**The Empire under Stress—Vibia Perpetua
the Martyr**

Toil and Trouble: A Case of Matricide—Nero
Disposes of Agrippina 246

Buried Alive: Cornelia—A Vestal Virgin
Goes Astray 254

Everyday Life for Marcus Aurelius—The Prince
Catches a Cold 258

Family Matters: Calpurnia—Orphan, Wife,
Niece, and Granddaughter 263

Horrors of the Arena—Seneca Observes
the Slaughter 266

The Divorce of Zois and Antipater 270

Chapter 10

Emperors and Entertainment 276

**Crowds, Cheers, and the Circus Maximus—
Diocles the Charioteer**

Ovid's Racetrack Romance 282

A Circus Race—Consentius Tests His Skills 292

Tigellinus—Breeder of Mares and Nightmare
for Rome 295

Sport and Defection: An Early Example—
Thomas the Charioteer 297

Epilogue 302

Whose Millennium Is It, Anyway?—Passing
Time: "Little Dennis" (Dionysius Exiguus)
Leaves a Big Impression 307

Glossary and Pronunciation Guide 312

Acknowledgments 321

Illustration Credits 327

Index 329



Illustrations, Maps, and Charts

Figures

- | | | | | | |
|------|---|----|------|---|-----|
| 1.1 | Imperial Rome in the fourth century A.D. (reconstruction) | 2 | 3.4 | Pompey | 64 |
| 1.2 | Roman Forum at the time of Constantine (reconstruction) | 3 | 3.5 | Cicero | 67 |
| 1.3 | Remains of the Roman Forum | 5 | 3.6 | Cassius | 72 |
| 1.4 | Street of buildings in Ostia | 6 | 3.7 | Coin of Brutus commemorating Caesar's assassination | 76 |
| 1.5 | The Tiber Island | 9 | 3.8 | Remains of the Temple of the Divine Julius in the Roman Forum | 77 |
| 1.6 | Etruscan tomb | 11 | 3.9 | Temple of Mars in the Forum of Augustus | 79 |
| 1.7 | Sarcophagus of a prosperous Etruscan woman | 11 | 3.10 | The Rubicon River | 82 |
| 1.8 | Bronze representation of an Etruscan soldier | 14 | 3.11 | The "Dying Gaul" | 83 |
| 1.9 | Marcellus | 18 | 3.12 | The waterfront at Londinium and the first "London Bridge" (model) | 85 |
| 1.10 | "Scorpion" catapult | 25 | 4.1 | Ptolemy XII Auletes | 88 |
| 1.11 | "Onager" catapult | 25 | 4.2 | Coin representing Cleopatra | 90 |
| 1.12 | Defensive works (Fortress of Euryalus) at Syracuse | 26 | 4.3 | Bust tentatively identified as Cleopatra | 91 |
| 1.13 | Archimedes' crane (artist's reconstruction) | 28 | 4.4 | Forum of Caesar | 94 |
| 2.1 | Relief depicting a slave auction | 40 | 4.5 | Octavian | 95 |
| 2.2 | Slave collar and plaque | 41 | 4.6 | Coin representing Antony | 96 |
| 2.3 | Household slaves at work | 45 | 4.7 | Coin representing Fulvia | 98 |
| 2.4 | Slaves baking bread | 45 | 4.8 | Agrippa | 113 |
| 2.5 | Mt. Aetna and the Theater at Tauromenium in Sicily | 48 | 5.1 | The Emperor Augustus | 124 |
| 2.6 | Gladiator helmet | 54 | 5.2 | Livia | 125 |
| 3.1 | Brutus | 59 | 5.3 | Wall painting from "House of Livia" | 127 |
| 3.2 | Caesar | 61 | 5.4 | "Sword of Tiberius" | 129 |
| 3.3 | Cato the Younger | 62 | 5.5 | Coin representing Augustus' astrological sign, Capricorn | 130 |
| | | | 5.6 | Germanicus | 132 |
| | | | 5.7 | Julia | 136 |
| | | | 5.8 | Remains of Tiberius' Villa Jovis on Capri | 138 |

- 5.9 Agrippina the Elder 141
- 5.10 Tiberius in old age 143
- 5.11 Caligula 144
- 6.1 The Colosseum 153
- 6.2 Relief depicting Titus in his chariot after his victory in the Jewish War 154
- 6.3 Relief depicting Titus' triumphal procession with the Menorah from the Temple of Jerusalem 156
- 6.4 Model of Jerusalem during the period of the Second Temple 156
- 6.5 Reconstruction of a provincial dining room during the Empire 159
- 6.6 Mt. Vesuvius and the ruins of Pompeii 162
- 6.7 House of the Vettii brothers at Pompeii 163
- 6.8 Wall paintings in the House of the Vettii 163
- 6.9 Reconstruction of a provincial kitchen during the Empire 165
- 6.10 Mosaic of servant preparing for banquet 166
- 6.11 Street in Pompeii 170
- 6.12 Reconstruction of a Roman street and shops 170
- 6.13 Ruins of Herculaneum 171
- 6.14 Bakery of Modestus, Pompeii 172
- 6.15 Amphitheater at Pompeii 173
- 6.16 The J. Paul Getty Museum (reconstruction of the "Villa of the Papyri" at Herculaneum) 177
- 6.17 Models of Pliny's villa 180–181
- 6.18 Reconstructed plan of Pliny's Laurentine villa 183
- 7.1 Roman legionary, first century A.D. 186
- 7.2 The Emperors Titus, Domitian, and Trajan 187
- 7.3 The Stoic philosopher Chrysippus of Soli in old age 188
- 7.4 Mosaic of an aging playwright (or actor) and his troupe 189
- 7.5 An old fisherman 191
- 7.6 An elderly Roman woman 195
- 7.7 Coin representing the elderly Emperor Nerva 198
- 7.8 Model of the fort at Housesteads along Hadrian's wall in Roman Britain 200
- 7.9 Letter sent by Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina 200
- 7.10 Reconstruction of household scene in Roman Britain 201
- 7.11 Gold body chain worn by woman in Roman Britain 201
- 7.12 Lake Como 203
- 7.13 Remains of the "Great Pool" at Bath, England 204
- 7.14 The "Tepid" pool at Bath 205
- 7.15 Semicircular warm-water pool at Bath 205
- 7.16 The "Frigidarium" at Bath 206
- 7.17 Model of the Roman bath complex at Lutetia 207
- 8.1 Julia Domna 211
- 8.2 Septimius Severus 212
- 8.3 Commodus 213
- 8.4 Praetorian Guardsmen 215
- 8.5 Coin representing Julia Maesa 216
- 8.6 Clodius Albinus 218
- 8.7 Letter written on Greek papyrus 221
- 8.8 The Arch of Septimius Severus at Rome 224
- 8.9 Remains of the Imperial Palace 227
- 8.10 Structural remains and wall paintings from Severus' headquarters at York 229
- 8.11 Geta, younger son of Septimius and Julia 234
- 8.12 Coin representing Caracalla 235
- 8.13 Elagabalus 238
- 8.14 Julia Mamaea 238
- 8.15 Severus Alexander 239
- 8.16 Coin representing Zenobia of Palmyra 241
- 9.1 Diocletian and his Tetrarchs 245
- 9.2 Nero 249
- 9.3 The Jordan River 250
- 9.4 The "Garden of Gethsemane" 251
- 9.5 "Tomb of St. Peter" in the Vatican necropolis 253

- 9.6 "Christian chapel" in the Bicentenary House at Herculaneum 253
- 9.7 Statue of a Chief Vestal 255
- 9.8 Catacombs of the Jordani at Rome 257
- 9.9 Serapis 260
- 9.10 Christian fish and anchor graffiti 261
- 9.11 Roman woman contemporary of Calpurnia and Pliny the Younger 264
- 9.12 First-second century relief commemorating service and release of Amazon and Achilla, two female gladiators 269
- 9.13 Constantine 272
- 9.14 Central mosaic floor panel from a Roman building at Hinton St. Mary, Dorset, England 273
- 9.15 Mosaic of a Christian church from end of fifth century A.D. 273
- 10.1 The Circus Maximus (reconstruction) 277
- 10.2 Modern site of the Circus Maximus 278
- 10.3 Plan of the Circus Maximus 279
- 10.4 Diagram of gates and starting line of the Circus 280
- 10.5 Cross section of the Circus Maximus 281
- 10.6 A circus program (sixth century A.D.) 283
- 10.7 Remains of shops and entrances at the Circus Maximus 284
- 10.8 A charioteer 287
- 10.9 Fragments depicting charioteers and teams 289
- 10.10 Scopus the charioteer 294
- 10.11 Remains of the Circus of Maxentius in Rome 299
- 10.12 Base of the obelisk from the Great Circus at Constantinople 299
- 10.13 Site of the Great Circus at Constantinople 300
- E.1 The walls of Constantinople 304
- E.2 Remains of the later Byzantine palace 306
- E.3 The observatory of the Caracol at Chichén Itzá in Yucatan 307
- E.4 Saxon Chancel of St Paul's Church, Jarrow, England 309
- E.5 Stonehenge 310

Maps

- 1 Ancient Italy xxiv
- 2 Geographical map of ancient Italy xxv
- 3 The Roman Forum (fourth century A.D.) 4
- 4 Imperial Rome 7
- 5 Early Rome 12
- 6 Rome's conquest of Italy 17
- 7 Southern Italy and Sicily 21
- 8 The Roman attack on Syracuse 27
- 9 Ancient Sicily 44
- 10 Rome at the time of Caesar 74
- 11 Egypt at the time of Cleopatra 89
- 12 Alexandria 92
- 13 Horace's journey to Brundisium 102
- 14 The Eastern Empire and Parthia 106
- 15 Actium 114
- 16 Mt. Vesuvius and environs, August 24, 79 A.D. 158
- 17 Pompeii 168
- 18 The Roman Empire at the death of Trajan (117 A.D.) 199
- 19 The Roman Empire in 211 A.D. 232
- 20 The Later Roman Empire (fourth century A.D.) 244
- 21 Spread of Christianity 271
- 22 Barbarian Europe and the Byzantine Empire c. 500 A.D. 305

Charts

- 1 Roman Republican Government (after 287 B.C.) 10
- 2 Augustus and his family, the Julio-Claudians 126



Chronology

The following chronology emphasizes the major events and people discussed in this volume.

Date Events and People

Monarchy (753–509 B.C.)

753	Traditional date Rome is founded by Romulus
753–509	Rome ruled by seven kings
6th century	Period of Etruscan domination

Republic (509–31 B.C.)

508	Horatius at the bridge (Chapter 1)
5th century	Conflict between <i>patricians</i> and <i>plebeians</i> ; local wars with Latins, Aequi, Volsci, and Veii
494	<i>Concilium plebis</i> and office of tribune of the plebs established
451–449	Rome's first law code, the Law of the Twelve Tables, established

387	Gallic sack of Rome; heroics of Camillus (Chapter 1)
367	Licinio-Sextian law established that one consul elected each year be plebeian
340–338	Latin League defeated and disbanded
327–304	War with the Samnites; Appian Way built
300	Ogulinian law makes plebeians eligible for all religious offices—last barrier to their holding any office removed

287	<i>Lex Hortensia</i> makes decisions of the <i>concilium plebis</i> (<i>plebiscita</i>) binding on all Romans
-----	---

280	Date by which Etruscans, Gauls, and Samnites had been subdued
280–275	War with Pyrrhus of Epirus, Rome's first international foe
272	Date by which Rome extends influence over all of Italy
264–241	First Punic War with Carthage over control of Sicily (which became Rome's first province)
250	
c. 240–c. 207	Livius Andronicus, founder of Roman literature, writing his works
237	Sardinia and Corsica occupied; made second Roman province in 227 B.C.
229	Rome established protectorate on Illyrian coast; first presence in Greek East
218–201	Second Punic War; Hannibal (Chapter 1) invades Italy
216	Roman disaster at Cannae
212–205	First Macedonian War with Philip V
213–211	Roman siege of Syracuse; Archimedes and Marcellus (Chapter 1)
202	Scipio Africanus defeats Hannibal at Zama; Carthage surrenders in 201 B.C.; Fabius Pictor composing first Roman history (in Greek)
200	
200–197	Second Macedonian War with Philip V
197–133	Spanish Wars
191–188	Syrian War against Antiochus III
184	Cato the Elder is censor
171–167	Third Macedonian War with Perseus; Aetolians butchered; 1000 Achaeans deported, including historian Polybius; 150,000 Epirotes sold into slavery
150	
149	Permanent court established to deal with extortion in provinces; death of Cato
149–146	Third Punic War; Scipio Aemilianus destroys Carthage; North Africa annexed as province
148–146	Fourth Macedonian War; Achaean League crushed, Corinth destroyed; Macedonia becomes Roman province; end of Greek autonomy
135–132	First Sicilian Slave Revolt; Eunus (Chapter 2)
133	Spanish Wars end; Roman mastery of Mediterranean world completed

The Late Republic (133–31 B.C.): Internal problems replace external ones; the “Roman Revolution,” the gradual breakdown of the Republic and its replacement with one-man rule, takes place.

133	Tribune Tiberius Gracchus' land reform bill and his assassination
123–122	Tribunates of Gaius Gracchus; popular cause at Rome elevated to serious political movement

121	<i>Senatus consultum ultimum</i> evoked for first time; death of Gaius Gracchus; Cornelia (Chapter 2)
112–105	Jugurthine War
109–101	Wars with Cimbri and Teutones
107–100	Marius consul six times; Roman army reformed
104–100	Second Sicilian Slave War
<hr/>	
91–88	Rome's war with Italian allies; Italians granted citizenship (89 B.C.)
88–82	Rome's first civil war
88	Consulship of Sulla; quarrels with Marius over Eastern command against Mithridates of Pontus; Sulla seizes Rome; Marius escapes
88–85	Sulla wars with Mithridates
87	Marius retakes Rome; dies in 86 B.C. during seventh consulship
82–78	Sulla dictator; reforms Rome along conservative lines; death of Sulla
75	<hr/>
73–71	Spartacus' slave revolt (Chapter 2)
70	Crassus and Pompey consuls; Cicero gains prominence through prosecution of Verres for extortion
67	Pompey commissioned to clear the seas of pirates; given Eastern command in 66 B.C. to defeat Mithridates (d. 63 B.C.) and reorganize Eastern provinces
63	Cicero's consulship; Catilinarian conspiracy; Cato the Younger emerges as powerful conservative; Caesar (aedile in 65 B.C.) elected <i>pontifex maximus</i>
62	Catiline defeated and killed; Pompey returns triumphant from East; Caesar praetor
60	Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey form "First Triumvirate"
59	Caesar is consul
58–49	Caesar in Gaul; invades Britain in 55 and 54 B.C.
58–52	Civil disturbances in Rome led by Clodius and Milo
56	Triumvirs renew pact at Luca; Crassus and Pompey consuls for 55 B.C.
54	Death of Julia, Caesar's daughter and wife of Pompey; links between triumvirs weaken
53	Crassus killed at Carrhae in Mesopotamia; "Triumvirate" ends
52	Clodius killed by Milo; Pompey made sole consul to restore order; Milo exiled
51–49	Gaul annexed; attempts by Caesar's enemies to disarm him fail; negotiations break down
50	<hr/>
49	Caesar crosses Rubicon; civil wars erupt; Pompey flees to Greece with army; Turia is married (Chapter 4)

- 48–44 Caesar is dictator
- 48 Pompey defeated at Pharsalus and slain in Egypt; Caesar meets Cleopatra
- 47–45 Caesar's victories in Pontus, Africa, and Spain; Cato's death in Africa (46 B.C.)
- 45 Cicero entertains Caesar in December (Chapter 3)
- 44 Caesar assassinated on March 15; Cleopatra flees Rome; Octavian designated Caesar's legal heir
- 43 Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus form "Second Triumvirate"; Cicero executed in proscriptions; death of Brutus' wife, Porcia (Chapter 3)
- 42 Brutus and Cassius defeated at Philippi
- 41–30 Cleopatra's relationship with Antony
- 40 Death of Antony's wife, Fulvia (Chapter 4); Pact of Brundisium; Antony and Octavian divide up Roman world; Antony marries Octavia
- 38 or 37 Horace's journey (Chapter 4); "Triumvirate" renewed at Tarentum (37 B.C.)
- 37–31 Tensions between Antony and Octavian; Antony with Cleopatra in East
- 34 "Donations of Alexandria"
- 31 Battle at Actium; Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide in 30 B.C.; Octavian seizes Egypt

The Roman Empire (31 B.C.–476 A.D.)

- 27 B.C. The Principate begins; Octavian, now Augustus, made ruler of Roman world
- 13 B.C. Divorce of Zois and Antipater (Chapter 9)
- 6 B.C.–2 A.D. Tiberius retires to Rhodes; meets Thrasyllus (Chapter 5)
- 2 B.C. Forum of Augustus with Temple of Mars dedicated; Julia banished for adulteries (Chapter 5)
- 4 A.D. Augustus adopts Tiberius as heir
- 8 A.D. Ovid (Chapter 10) banished by Augustus
- 9 A.D. Teutoburgian Wood massacre (Chapter 6)
- 14 A.D. Death of Augustus; death of Julia

The Julio-Claudian Dynasty

- Tiberius (14–37 A.D.)
- Apicius active (Chapter 6)
- 14–31 Period of Sejanus' influence on Tiberius
- 19 Death of Germanicus; astrologers, Jews, and others expelled from Rome; Paulina (Chapter 5)
- 25 Suicide of Cremutius Cordus (Chapter 5)