

Harriet I. Flower, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic, Second Edition.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp.xli, 476. ISBN: 9781107032248.

When the first edition of the *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* came out back in 2004, the idea of a companion piece to the study of Roman history was very much in its infancy. As such, the volume fulfilled a welcomed role in introducing students and the budding academic to the pertinent topics surrounding the Roman Republic, and served as an informative intermediary between ignorance and the more daunting and comprehensive *Cambridge Ancient History* series. In the decade or so since its publication, however, the market has become inundated with a plethora of companion pieces, volumes that not only cover a similar range of topics as our *Companion*, but also attempt to appropriate its mission statement, which remains unchanged in this second edition: ‘The *Companion* invites further reading and discussion and so should serve as a starting point for contemplating republican Rome rather than an end’ (Flower, ‘Introduction to the First Edition’, xli). The question becomes, then, whether this second edition of the *Companion* manages to stay relevant in a much more competitive environment, or has its position been usurped by the more recent volumes?

For the most part, the fifteen chapters ported over from the original remain unchanged. To be fair, some corrections have been made, such as the matter of the quinquereme identified by Keaveney in his review of the first edition (*Classical Review* 55.1 (2005) 242), and the notes, together with the bibliography, for each entry have been updated to include recent discoveries and discussions. This, however, has not resulted in much meaningful alteration within the text itself, and, even with such updates, consideration for these issues do not significantly alter the progression of ideas from the first edition. Two exceptions are Lomas’ ‘Italy During the Roman Republic, 338 – 31BC’ and Fantham’s ‘Literature in the Roman Republic’, where some new material have been added to clarify and elucidate. But these are the exceptions that prove the rule, and are arguably underwhelming exceptions at that, with each chapter seeing maybe two supplementary paragraphs. Of course, I do not intend to suggest that the *Companion* necessarily suffers for this, given that the original pieces were carefully and critically written, but because of this, I do not intend to dwell on each chapter here. Instead, I refer the reader to earlier reviews of the first edition to get a sense of the criticisms, as many still carry over to the present volume (Roth’s review in the BMCR is rather comprehensive in this regard—2005.07.47: <http://bmcrr.brynmawr.edu/2005/2005-07-47.html>).

One problem, however, I feel worth mentioning is the editor’s decision to not update the contributions by Kuttner, ‘Roman Art During the Republic’, and Flower, ‘Spectacle and Political Culture in the Roman Republic’. The two chapters, largely surveys of their respective topics, are useful enough in their own right as sources of information (with Kuttner’s piece being really quite extensive), but without any notes accompanying the main text it is difficult to employ them as a springboard for further research or even to verify any of the claims made, thereby limiting their ultimate

potential. Although a detailed bibliography is included for each chapter (and here again Kuttner's is extensive), the editor has not made it easy to navigate through the wealth of scholarship in any given topic. This I find to be a glaring omission, especially since the other entries in this volume have very helpful notes, and the publication of the second edition would have been the perfect opportunity to correct the oversight.

As for the material new to the second edition, these include a new introduction by the editor, Flower; 'Population' by Hin; 'The Great Transformation: Slavery and the Free Republic' by Shaw; and Osgood's 'The Rise of the Empire in the West (264–50 BC)'. Needless to say, these additions to the volume are much appreciated, and help to round out an already impressive list of themes and topics. Of these, though, I find that it is actually the new introduction that proves the most useful. Rather than simply reiterating the purpose of the *Companion* and justifying the existence of a second edition, Flower takes the effort to list many of the major manuscript publications since 2004 that deal both with Roman history in general, and with the Republic more specifically. There is also a section detailing the online resources available to the public, with the ones requiring subscriptions conveniently highlighted. Such efforts correspond well with the overall mission statement of the *Companion*, to facilitate further research into the field. Moreover, in this second introduction, Flower provides a brief overview of her 2010 book, *Roman Republics*, in which she summarizes a new chronological framework for the study of the period, one that is divided into thirteen phases, based on more minute trends and happenings. This, too, offers an interesting point of discussion, and encourages the audience to approach the Roman Republic with a fresh perspective. It is then somewhat unfortunate that none of the essays in this volume take up Flower's challenge, and none were revised to incorporate her system of periodization.

The other new entries are, as I said, helpful, but are also of varying degrees of quality. Hin's piece on demographics in the Republic wisely eschews conclusive statements on the matter, preferring instead to identify overarching patterns and to offer 'hypothetical scenarios of population development' (164). Although the lack of anything concrete is a little disappointing, Hin's approach is perfectly understandable given the nature of our evidence; if anything, of the three new chapters, Hin's approach most closely adheres to the professed purpose of the *Companion*, as it eagerly invites the reader to consider critically the issues at hand. Conversely, Shaw's chapter on slavery is overly ambitious. While Shaw ought to be commended for his attempt to provide an overarching analysis, taking the reader through a chronological history of slavery during the Republic, the piece itself suffers from oversimplification of some rather difficult and much debated issues. For instance, in discussing the slave uprisings of the second and first centuries BC in Sicily, Shaw mentions that the governor Verres 'was a good man who had done a good job' (204), and was the victim, or 'fall guy', of the political regime that sought to control by any means the large slave population on the island. As interesting a perspective as this may be, it is nonetheless a perspective, and surely warrants more attention than this categorical statement.

In an episode reminiscent of the question of quinquereemes from the first edition, Osgood's take on Verres differs drastically from Shaw's. In his chapter on Roman imperialism in the west, Osgood characterizes Verres as a villainous governor, who was expecting his network of friends in Rome to acquit him of his blatant criminal activities (316–317). Just like Shaw, however, Osgood offers very little discussion in support of this attitude, one that sees Verres as one of the many opportunists during the power struggles of the Late Republic. In any case, Osgood's entry suffers from the same oversimplification as Shaw's: in offering a narrative history of Rome's conquests in the west, Osgood passes over important concerns and discussions of divergent views, relying instead on the basic premises of bellicosity and the desire for profit to explain Roman expansion. Moreover, there is a notable lack of references, both primary and secondary, in the chapter, in places where Osgood really ought to have provided support for his claims. As such, the chapter reads more like a textbook entry, and does not quite live up to the premise advocated by the editor.

The problem that companion pieces always face is one of identity. What is it meant to do? What is its role in academia? What is its target audience? The *Companion* tries to get ahead of this through a strong mission statement: not only to inform, but also to encourage further contemplation and discussion. For the most part, the *Companion* lives up to this. To be sure, not every entry abides by this premise, and more overall effort could have been made to update the chapters, but, to answer the question I posed earlier, on the whole the *Companion* remains a strong and competitive option in a sea of other similar publications. The only caveat I would offer is that if the reader already owns the first edition, it is difficult to recommend categorically the purchase of the second.

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