



Rome's Revolution: Death of the Republic and Birth of the Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization)

Richard Alston

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Novelized, televised, and endlessly scrutinized by scholars, the fall of the Roman Republic marks one of history's great turning points. Historians have studied the descent of the Republic into civil war as a great political tragedy, a warning from the past about the unsustainability of empires; political scientists have labeled it a parable about militarism, populism, moral decay, or the inevitable corruption of political systems. Yet the familiar story of the Roman Republic's downfall continues to be the story of its elites. What if we started thinking about Roman politics not from the perspectives of Caesar and Cicero, but from the point of view of the soldier, the peasant, or the pauper? In an original account of what he calls Rome's revolution, Richard Alston reinscribes these humble protagonists into their tumultuous era. They, like the ruthless aristocrats they swore allegiance to, were political agents, negotiating their positions in the context of a "failed state."

Rome's Revolution blends riveting historical narrative with socio-economic analysis, restoring a rich context to the cataclysmic violence of the period. In addition to chronicling the drama of aristocratic rivalries, the book digs beneath the high politics of Cicero, Caesar, Antony and Octavian to examine the problems of making a living in first-century BC Italy. Portraying the revolution as the crisis of a violent society--both among the citizenry and among a ruling class whose legitimacy was dwindling--*Rome's Revolution* provides new insight into the motivations that drove men to march on their capital city and slaughter their compatriots.

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