

Book Review

Late Republican Rome, 88–31 BC

Santangelo (F.). (ed.) *LACTOR Sourcebooks in Ancient History*, Vol. 7. 2nd edn. Pp. x + 390, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023. maps. Paper, €23.33. ISBN: 9781009383356.
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Leslie Ivings^{ID}

Independent Scholar, South Africa
ivingsl188@gmail.com

The LACTOR sourcebook series has long served as a reliable bridge between classroom and archive: They are compact volumes that gather translated primary texts, maps, and short apparatus designed specifically for teachers and students. The new second edition of *Late Republican Rome, 88–31 BC*, edited and translated by Federico Santangelo, continues this tradition while widening the chronological and thematic frame previously covered by the series' out-of-print *Roman Politics 80–44 BC*. Santangelo's volume offers a generous selection of literary extracts, inscriptions, coin legends, and legal fragments, together with useful teaching aids (maps, glossary, concordances, and appendices) that make it particularly well-suited to undergraduate and school-level courses on the later Republic.

The book is neatly divided into 2 parts. Part I provides a concise narrative of the period, framed by a prologue (133–88 BC), a core narrative (88–44 BC) and an epilogue that carries the story through the years of the triumvirate to the emergence of the principate. Part II, under the rubric 'Key themes', collects focused source clusters on topics such as Rome and Italy, Rome and the wider empire, the imperial economy, law and courts, intellectual life, women (under the heading 'Wives and daughters'), and political culture and practice. This 2-tier structure, narrative followed by thematic packets, is pedagogically effective: It allows instructors to use the sources either to complement a chronological lecture sequence or to underpin seminars on discrete themes. The book's table of contents and the balance between narrative and thematic material are clear and user-friendly.

Santangelo's selections are judicious. The editor favours a mixed diet: canonical narrative sources (for example, Appian, Plutarch, Dio) sit alongside epigraphic material and lesser-known documentary fragments. This is an important strength for classroom teaching. Students frequently leave courses with an over-reliance on narrative prose; here, they encounter the administrative and material traces that complicate simple narratives of decline and conflict. The inclusion of coin legends and law fragments is

especially welcome for sessions that aim to train students in working with non-literary evidence. The translations are serviceable and aimed at clarity for the non-specialist reader; where necessary, the brief notes steer readers towards secondary literature without overwhelming them.

For teachers, the volume's practical features are the most immediately useful. The maps (clear and appropriately scaled), the glossary of persons and terms, and the concordances between extracts and the wider source tradition make lesson planning quicker and reduce the friction of assigning primary texts to students unfamiliar with Latin or Greek. The thematic arrangement is ideal for module design: A fortnight on 'Law, lawyers and law courts' can be built entirely from the supplied extracts, while seminars on the social history of the late Republic can draw on the 'Wives and daughters' section to interrogate gender and family. The book is therefore a particularly good fit for survey courses at A-level, introductory undergraduate courses, and source-based assessment tasks at the undergraduate level.

No sourcebook is neutral, and editorial decisions here carry weight. The title's chronological framing (88–31 BC) necessarily foregrounds moments of high politics, Sulla, Caesar, and the triumvirate, and in consequence, some social or provincial dimensions receive relatively less space. The 'Wives and daughters' heading is slightly ungainly in its phrasing and might suggest a narrower set of gender questions than modern students or teachers would prefer; a broader 'Women' rubric might have encouraged a fuller engagement with female agency and voice. Some instructors may also wish for more explicit teaching prompts or questions accompanying each source cluster; the apparatus assumes a degree of pedagogical confidence and does not always scaffold novice teachers through source criticism exercises. These are minor reservations in an otherwise solid teaching tool.

In regard to practical classroom use, I can recommend 3 practical ways to deploy this volume in the classroom:

1. **Weekly source pack for blended courses:** Pair the short narrative chapters with one thematic source cluster each week (for example, Narrative Week 2 + 'Imperial economy' cluster) and require students to submit a one-page document analysis. The unit's concordances and glossary mean that such assignments can be set without extra primary-text transcription work.
2. **Seminar debates and mock trials:** The law extracts and political speeches are ideal for role-playing exercises. Assign students to represent magistrates, litigants, or political opponents, and use the supplied texts as briefs for mock trials or senatorial debates.
3. **Independent research projects:** For final-year undergraduates, the epigraphic and numismatic items provide manageable entry points for short research essays that employ non-literary evidence. The appendices and concordances help students trace original contexts for citations.

Compared with older LACTOR volumes and similar sourcebooks which sometimes present only literary sources, Santangelo's

edition stands out for its balanced inclusion of documentary material. It deliberately replaces the older *Roman Politics 80–44 BC* and expands the chronological range to situate the late Republic within longer trends, a decision that benefits teaching by encouraging a longer-view narrative without sacrificing thematic depth. For departments that already own general sourcebooks, Santangelo's volume serves best as a focused supplement for the later Republic, rather than a wholesale replacement for multi-period anthologies.

Late Republican Rome, 88–31 BC is a reliable, teacher-friendly sourcebook that marries the narrative sweep necessary for survey teaching with a thematic apparatus that supports source-based

learning. Its careful inclusion of inscriptions, coin legends, and legal fragments makes it especially valuable for courses that aim to move beyond literary texts. Minor editorial choices (terminology for gender topics, a lack of pedagogical prompts in some sections) limit its plug-and-play usability marginally, but for most teachers and students this volume will be an excellent, durable addition to departmental collections and personal reading lists. For those designing modules on the later Republic, Santangelo's sourcebook will likely become the default set of primary materials for classroom use.

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