



# The Laws of the Roman People: Public Law in the Expansion and Decline of the Roman Republic

*Callie Williamson*

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## **The Laws of the Roman People: Public Law in the Expansion and Decline of the Roman Republic**

Callie Williamson

For 400 years public lawmaking held the Roman Republic together. Despite (or arguably because of) the great complications of its tribal system and the law system's intricate rituals, all levels of society accepted the law as a means of settling conflicts and securing stability. This interesting, detailed study, draws on accounts of over 550 laws and proposals from contemporary sources, to investigate the reasons why such large numbers of people outside the city of Rome itself were willing to accept the Roman lawmaking process. Much of the study focuses on the 2nd and 1st centuries BC when civil war in Italy and the solution to the war, of granting citizenship to all Italians, began the Republic's decline. This was compounded by a succession of dictators, notably Sulla and Caesar, who removed lawmaking from the people. Also, Callie Williamson argues, the size of the growing empire meant that the old systems had become impractical. Cicero is a particularly important source for the transformations in the lawmaking process at this time. A list of laws concludes the study while tables provide additional information on their subjects and sponsors and the pattern of public lawmaking.

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