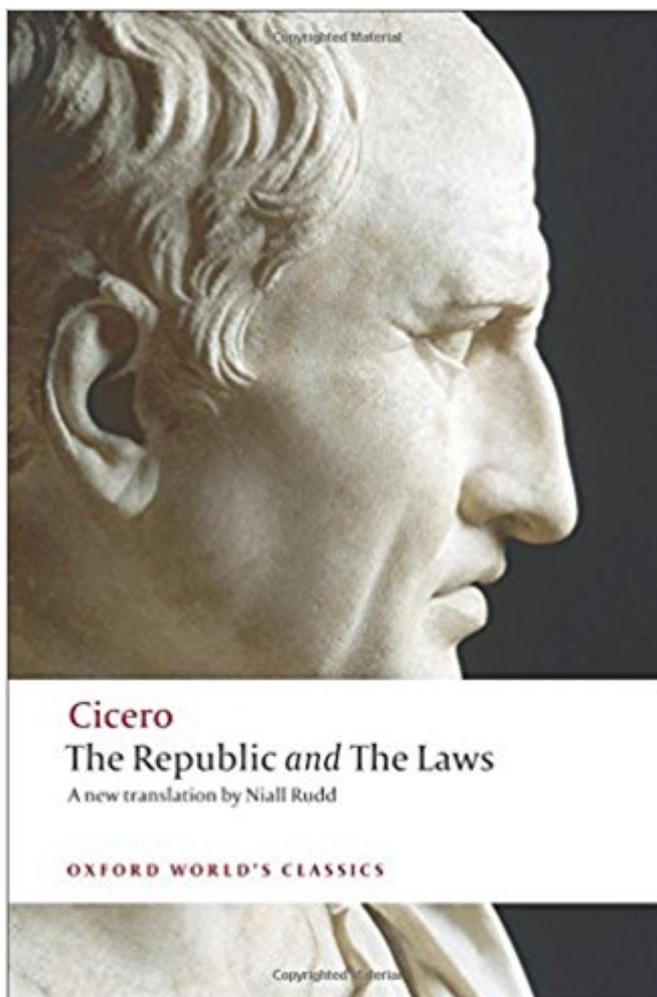


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The Republic And The Laws (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

Cicero's *The Republic* is an impassioned plea for responsible government written just before the civil war that ended the Roman Republic in a dialogue following Plato. Drawing on Greek political theory, the work embodies the mature reflections of a Roman ex-consul on the nature of political organization, on justice in society, and on the qualities needed in a statesman. Its sequel, *The Laws*, expounds the influential doctrine of Natural Law, which applies to all mankind, and sets out an ideal code for a reformed Roman Republic, already half in the realm of utopia. This is the first complete English translation of both works for over sixty years and features a lucid Introduction, a Table of Dates, notes on the Roman constitution, and an Index of Names. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

Book Information

Series: Oxford World's Classics

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reissue edition (July 15, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 019954011X

ISBN-13: 978-0199540112

Product Dimensions: 7.9 x 0.6 x 5.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #68,342 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Ancient & Classical](#) #50 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science > Constitutions](#) #65 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Ancient](#)

Customer Reviews

From Plato's *Republic* or before, people have written their ideas of what the ideal state would look like, and especially how it would be governed. Cicero, a citizen of classical Rome adds his thoughts in the first half of this volume. To him, the philosophically ideal state would be very much like Rome

itself. Cicero establishes early on (p.16) that, regarding the marvels of the physical world, "that kind of knowledge will not make us better or happier people." Only statecraft is worthy of serious study. That ideal state would be populated by "We Romans, paragons of justice as we are" (p.63-64), who forbid many industries in their outlying states "in order to enhance the value of our own products." He reinforces this idea of the predatory state by saying "No state is so stupid as not to prefer wicked domination to virtuous subjection" (p.67), as if domination and subjection are the only two roles that states may hold with respect to each other. Cicero presents his thoughts in the form of Platonic dialogs, but without the clear direction of Plato's works. Instead, these little plays express Cicero's unfailingly high opinion of himself and of Rome, dismissing all others (both people and states) as unworthy of interest. His "Laws" follow the same pattern, exploring the ideal by reciting the rules that Rome had in place, with only minor revisions. Mixed in with his smug sense of superiority regarding self and state, Cicero makes a few points of interest. He compares monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy as forms of government. He notes that each has flaws, and each holds the seeds of its own collapse. Instead of any one, Cicero proposes an ideal government - i.e., Rome's own - that combines all three.

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