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18: The Roman Republic and the French and American Revolutions

Mortimer N. S. Sellers

When George Washington gave his inaugural speech as the first president of the United States under the new federal constitution, he asserted that "the destiny of the republican model of government" was "*deeply*, perhaps . . . *finally*, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American People."[1] A new "Senate" would meet on the "Capitol" hill, overlooking the "Tiber" river (formerly "Goose Creek"), as in Rome,[2] to restore "the sacred fire of liberty" to the Western world.[3] The vocabulary of eighteenth-century revolution reverberated with purposeful echoes of Republican Rome as political activists self-consciously assumed the Roman mantle. James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, the primary authors and advocates of the United States Constitution, wrote together pseudonymously as "Publius" to defend their creation,[4] associating themselves with Publius Valerius Poplicola, founder and first consul of the Roman Republic.[5] Camille Desmoulins attributed the French Revolution to Cicero's ideal of Roman politics, imbibed by children in the schools.[6] At every opportunity, American and French revolutionaries proclaimed their desire to reestablish the "stupendous fabrics" of republican government that had fostered liberty at Rome.[7]

The Roman name of "republic" evoked first and above all the memory of government without kings.[8] Roman authors dated their republic from the expulsion of Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and mourned its fall in the principate of Augustus.[9] As French and American politicians came increasingly into conflict with their own monarchs, they found a valuable ideology of opposition already fully formed in the Roman senatorial attitude toward Caesar and his

successors. The guiding principle of this republican tradition, as remembered (for example) by Thomas Paine, was government for the "*res publica*, the public affairs, or the public good," perceived as naturally antithetical to monarchy and to any other form of arbitrary rule.[10] Paine and other eighteenth-century republicans viewed the individual and collective well-being of citizens as the only legitimate purpose of government. Their rallying cry of "liberty" signified subjection to laws made for the common good, and to nothing and to no one else.[11] Statesmen traced this principle to the frequently cited passage in Livy[12] that attributes the liberty of Rome to Lucius Junius Brutus and to his introduction of elected magistrates into Roman politics, constrained by the rule of law.[13]

American and French republicans thought of themselves as part of a 2,000-year-old tradition originating in Rome. The standard account divided political science between the "ancient prudence," destroyed by Caesar and Augustus, "whereby a civil society of men is instituted and preserved upon the foundation of *common interest*," and the "modern prudence," in force ever since, "by which some man, or some few men, subject a city or a nation, and rule it according to his or their private interests."[14] Republicans fought to restore the ancient prudence, which had ended "with the liberty of Rome."[15] John Adams, the Massachusetts republican (and later president of the United States), credited this analysis to James Harrington, the English commonwealth's man,[16] who attributed it to Donato Giannotti, the Florentine exile,[17] who had it from Tacitus,[18] in a passage made popular for English and American readers by Thomas Gordon[19] and passed on as a legacy of liberty from generation to generation.[20] The tradition of republican opposition to arbitrary authority in Europe had developed far in advance of the French and American revolutions[21] and strongly influenced political events centuries before new republics emerged on the scene, or nations knew them by that name.[22]

Thomas Hobbes perceived the threat to settled institutions in republican doctrine and blamed the schools and universities for instigating the English Civil War by teaching "*Cicero*, and other writers [who] have grounded their Civil doctrine, on the opinions of the Romans, who were taught to hate Monarchy" and to love republican government, so that "by reading of these Greek, and Latine Authors, men from their childhood have gotten a habit (under a false shew of Liberty) . . . of licentious[ly] controlling the actions of their Sovereigns; and again of controlling those controllers, with the effusion of so much blood; as I think I may truly say, there was never any thing so dearly bought,

as these Western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latine tongues."[23] Italian, Dutch, and English reformers all appealed to Roman institutions,[24] with enough success that, by the early eighteenth century in Britain, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon (writing as "Cato") could claim that "[t]he same principles of nature and reason that supported liberty in Rome, must support it here and everywhere,"[25] Hanoverian England was "the best republick in the world, with a prince at the head of it," being "a thousand degrees nearer a-kin to a commonwealth . . . than it is to absolute monarchy"[26]

"Commonwealth" was simply the English translation of "republic," but the short history and ultimate failure of the self-styled "Commonwealth" of England in the seventeenth century complicated subsequent usage. Although the English commonwealth was denominated "*respublica*" on Oliver Cromwell's state seals,[27] as the American Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was styled in Latin "*Respublica*" in all its early law reports,[28] the word "commonwealth" came to be associated with parliamentary unicameralism during the English Civil War and later with Pennsylvania's famously unicameral constitution of 1776.[29] This made the name of "commonwealth" both "unpopular" and "odious" to many who would have preferred institutions more faithful to the older Roman model of "mixed" republican government.[30] Opponents of the Pennsylvania plan formed what they called the "Republican Society" to advocate the stronger checks and balances of a more truly "republican" constitution.[31]

French republicanism developed its institutions under the strong influence of Benjamin Franklin, who had presided at Pennsylvania's constitutional convention. Franklin represented the United States as ambassador to France from 1776 until 1785, and he secured the translation of the first American state constitutions into French. French opinion had long admired Pennsylvania as a modern Sparta and its founder, William Penn, as the new American Lycurgus.[32] This contributed to a gradual divergence between French republicanism, which looked to Pennsylvania, Sparta, and English Commonwealth authors for its inspiration as much as it did to Rome, and American republicanism, which looked primarily to Rome but also to the British Whig "republican" tradition as it had existed after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.[33] The practical results of these differing attitudes were constitutional first, contributing to French carelessness about the checks and balances of republican government, and cultural second, leading to a greater French emphasis on public virtue than Americans felt would be necessary under the republican form of government.[34]

The problem for would-be republicans, in America as much as in France, was that the Roman Republic itself had ultimately failed. Tacitus, in a well-known passage, described republican government as fragile and evanescent, easier to praise than to practice for long.[35] Tacitus gave a sympathetic presentation of the Emperor Galba's argument that the Roman Empire had simply become too large to continue under republican institutions and needed a measure of slavery to survive.[36] Montesquieu made this supposition famous in his *De l'esprit des lois*, which concluded that large republics will inevitably become corrupt and die into despotism.[37] All modern republicans had to face the problem of Rome's failure, but various authors offered different remedies, depending on their circumstances and to some extent on which Roman sources they read (or chose to read). Certain revolutionaries cited Livy to advocate the rule of law.[38] Others followed Plutarch in their emphasis on rural simplicity.[39] Sallust had stressed the dangers of corruption.[40] The question facing modern republicans was which "combination of powers in society" would "compel the formation of good and equal laws" and "an impartial execution, and faithful interpretation of them, so that the citizens may constantly enjoy the benefit of them, and be sure of their continuance."[41]

The importance of Rome's republican model for French and American revolutionaries lay in the courage it gave them to contemplate government without a king by providing politicians with a rival set of political institutions opposed to the hereditary principle. Roman republican rhetoric had stressed the importance of the common good, the corruption of kings, the authority of the senate, the balance of the constitution, and the sovereignty of the people.[42] This set the tone for public debate. Agitators disputing pseudonymously in the newspapers called themselves "A Republican,"[43] "Civis,"[44] "Cato,"[45] "Curtius,"[46] "Brutus,"[47] "Publius,"[48] "Cincinnatus,"[49] and so forth. They all struck Roman poses, but what they actually fought over in arms and disputed in print was the power and constitution of the state. The republican revolutions of the eighteenth century sought government for the common good ("republican government") but also sought the constitution best suited to secure government for the common good (the "republican form of government"), which always led them back to republican Rome. Rome's great and lasting contribution to the French and American revolutions consisted not only in political principles but also in a set of constitutional mechanisms designed to secure republican liberty through the fundamental structure of the state.[50]

John Adams, the preeminent American political scientist of his era and author of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,[51] collected in his *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* three volumes of examples and commentaries on the "reading and reasoning which produced the American constitutions."[52] Adams traced "the checks and balances of republican government" back to the "mixed governments" of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy attempted "with different success" in ancient Greece and Rome.[53] The Greeks never mastered the "checks and balances of free government," to their ultimate cost,[54] but Adams (citing Cicero) reviewed how the Romans had developed institutions to protect freedom and justice through a careful balance and mixture of the different powers of the state.[55] The principal Roman texts cited by Adams in his introduction to define republican government were Cicero's endorsement of the mixed constitution,[56] his prescription for civic "harmony," secured by checks and balances,[57] and his conclusion that republics exist first and above all to serve the common good.[58] Adams supplied all three texts for his readers, both in Latin and in English paraphrase, along with two other excerpts from Cicero's *Republic* reiterating the primacy of the common good over democracy and identifying the common good with justice.[59] "As all the ages of the world have not produced a greater statesman and philosopher united in the same character" than Cicero, Adams concluded, "his authority should have great weight."[60]

Cicero's unrivaled authority in republican politics supported the balancing of powers between three branches of government,[61] very much in the form that it had already evolved in the British colonies of North America in the 150 years before the American Revolution.[62] Americans noticed the parallel, which strengthened their resolve to protect their old institutions against British innovation.[63] They also shared many of Cicero's fundamentally patrician attitudes. American politicians like James Madison drew a sharp distinction between their "republican" pursuit of the common good and the "democratic" tyranny of simple majority rule.[64] The single greatest difference between Roman republican institutions, as Americans remembered them, and America's own (as they hoped) more stable republican constitution was "*the total exclusion of the people in their collective capacity*" from any share in the government of the United States.[65] Americans hoped that by extending the "representative" principle already present in Rome's consuls and senate to other formerly more "democratic" branches of government,[66] they

could introduce a "republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government."[67] The American House of Representatives would replace Rome's popular assemblies to act, in a sense, as a second senate, helping defend the people "against their own temporary errors and delusions."[68]

The sixth book of Polybius provided the classical summary of the "republican form of government" that eighteenth-century republicans sought to perfect by modifying the Roman constitution. Polybius' endorsement of limited and divided power stressed a balance between monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.[69] His modern successors proposed instead the checks and balances not so much of "orders" or "classes" of men as of "offices" held by otherwise equal citizens.[70] The evil to be avoided was "tyranny" or the establishment of any "unlimited power" that some one, few, or many citizens might use to dominate the rest.[71] John Adams provided translations and a summary of Polybius' sixth book in his collection of republican sources,[72] published just in time to be used by the delegates at the United States Constitutional Convention.[73] Modern would-be republicans remembered the Roman consuls as having been primarily executive officers; the senate was thought of as having been primarily responsible for finances and declarations of war, and the popular assemblies were understood to have held the power of electing magistrates and approving the nation's laws and wars.[74] They struggled to improve this balance in their own constitutions – as in the United States, where the president was the executive,[75] the Senate ratified all treaties,[76] and the House of Representatives succeeded the Roman popular assemblies in holding final approval over all laws and declarations of war.[77] The aim of the modern republics still remained what moderns thought that it had been at Rome – the maintenance of strong enough political checks and balances so that whenever any branch of the government or people became too "ambitious," the others would unite to control it, thus keeping all public powers within their original bounds, as prescribed by the Constitution.[78] The United States Constitution guarantees to every state in the Union a "republican form of government,"[79] enforced by means of federal power against the states' governments, as in the American Civil War.[80]

French republicans never developed a stable set of political theories or institutions as clear and coherent as those set forth in John Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* or James Madison and Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist* letters, but they drew on the same Roman sources and came to many of the same conclusions. The Baron de Montesquieu's masterpiece *De l'esprit*

des lois (1748) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Du contrat social* (1762) both preceded the French and American revolutions, and were "scarcely republican" in the eyes of subsequent writers.[81] Nevertheless, both relied heavily on Roman authorities and profoundly influenced American (mostly Montesquieu) and French (mostly Rousseau) republican thought. Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (died 1781) and the Abbé Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (died 1785) had both interpreted American republicanism for French readers without fully endorsing the North American models. Turgot proposed a single all-powerful public assembly and criticized American bicameralism.[82] Mably disliked the American commercial spirit, which he thought would make Americans corrupt.[83] Both men's attitudes reflected a French sense of the "ancients" and "moderns," well summarized by Benjamin Constant in the wake of the French Revolution's collapse into empire. Constant dismissed ancient "liberty" as having required universal subjection to the public will – a will expressed collectively in large public assemblies and under the direction of a public political virtue that modern citizens had lost and could never hope to regain.[84] Montesquieu had doubted that ancient republicanism of this kind could ever survive outside small homogenous cantons.[85] Rousseau reluctantly agreed,[86] adding that democratic assemblies of limited local populations offered the only realistic hope of republican liberty or political justice in this world.[87]

Rousseau's conception of republican virtue and his dogmatism about the necessary corruption of large states set an almost impossible task for French republicans and contributed to the excesses of Maximilien de Robespierre and the Jacobin Terror in France. Like Livy and John Adams, Rousseau identified republican government with the rule of law under the sovereignty of the people[88] acting to secure their common good.[89] Rousseau described such public decisions as expressions of the "general will."[90] The people are the "sovereign" authors of the laws that bind them,[91] which makes them "free,"[92] but only so long as the sovereign people legislate collectively in pursuit of their common good.[93] Rousseau differed from other republicans only in his opposition to representation in the popular assembly[94] and his heightened fear of "factions," by which he meant any group, large or small, acting in its own private interest.[95] These views had significant practical implications, at least in France. If all laws have to be ratified by democratic assemblies of the people,[96] then the people must become virtuous[97] or mutually reasonable (which is the same thing).[98] Rousseau wrote of changing human nature[99] and believed that good public morals would be necessary to maintain any successful republican government.[100] Yet

the French were notoriously corrupt and depraved.[101] This made the maintenance of their virtue an extremely difficult task, perhaps an impossible one, and so, with his French successors, Rousseau supposed that without profound reforms, some peoples (perhaps including the French themselves) would simply remain unfit for republican government.[102] French republicans looked upon public virtue as rare and difficult to maintain.[103] American republicans preferred to believe that by instituting good orders of government they could secure good men.[104]

The history of republican principles in Europe in the centuries preceding the French and American revolutions saw a series of political advances, as scholars, then clerics, courtiers, and kings, steeped in Latin learning, embraced the republican commitment to government for the common good. Some even recognized the desirability of popular sovereignty and mixed or balanced government to secure the common good while at the same time doubting their practicality, given the fallen state of European morals.[105] In his answer to the *XIX Propositions Made by Both Houses of Parliament* in 1642, King Charles I claimed that England was already a mixed and balanced government.[106] The English "Cato" said the same of England under George I,[107] while disavowing the thought that any fully implemented "Republick" would be "practicable" in England's current circumstances.[108] This remained the American position until 1776, after the publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, which convinced many Americans that the king's "long and violent abuse of power"[109] had finally made it necessary to develop the "republican materials" long embedded in England's mixed and balanced constitution.[110] The French were just as hesitant until the king's flight to Varennes in June 1791, and even then they brought him back and renounced the prospect of a full republic.[111] Politicians denied that they were republicans,[112] although Robespierre did defend the constitution proposed after Varennes as a "republic with a king at the head of it."[113] The French introduced most of the elements of the republican form of government into their constitution in 1791, but they maintained their constitutional monarchy until August 10, 1792.[114]

The French revolutionary model of a republic with a king at the head of it was wholly in keeping with Rousseau's political precepts.[115] Rousseau had always made a strict distinction between the magistrates, who could be hereditary, and the public legislative assemblies, which should include the whole people and constitute the only legitimate sources of law.[116] While Rousseau would have preferred that elected magistrates implement the people's laws,[117] he accepted that sometimes

a monarch might govern "legitimately" – that is, in accordance with laws that had already been approved in the public assemblies.[118] Both Montesquieu and Rousseau had suggested that some nations might be or become too large or corrupt to be ruled as republics (as in Rome), and that monarchs sometimes suited such states better than elected magistrates did, despite their well-known injustices.[119] Yet Rome had survived as a republic for many years despite its size. This offered the French some hope.[120] They attempted various stratagems to make the people more virtuous, and Rousseau even considered the institution of slavery, justified as having been the vehicle through which Spartan citizens attained the leisure to give thorough attention to the public good and so properly pursue their deliberative duties in the legislature.[121]

The French republicanism of Rousseau and his disciples differed from its Roman, Polybian, and American antecedents in its general reliance on unanimity in the public assemblies, rather than on checks and balances, to guard against faction.[122] While Polybius, Madison,[123] Adams,[124] and even Montesquieu[125] wrote of using power as a check on power and ambition to counteract ambition, Rousseau turned to mixed government only to protect popular sovereignty, by preventing magistrates from usurping the legislative power of the people.[126] French scholars studied the Roman *comitia* in detail for ideas about how to guide public legislative debate, whether through the use of census classes, through the exclusion of the proletariat, or by instituting a body of censors to guard against the greed, intrigue, and inconstancy of "modern" human society.[127] Montesquieu thought that many proto-republican checks and balances had existed already under the Roman kings.[128] This made it easier to tolerate monarchy, even in a state that understood republican liberty as the primary object of government. Learned Frenchmen thought that Roman liberty had first been lost, not through the agency of kings, but rather when democracy invaded the diplomatic authority of the senate and usurped the magistrates' executive power.[129]

Latin literature and the Roman ethos were not a novelty in 1789. Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713) and Voltaire's *Brutus* (1730)[130] had promoted a republican sensibility in the theater. Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1784) mimicked republican austerity in art. Charles Willson Peale's portrait of William Pitt (1768) shows the prime minister in a toga standing beside a statue of Roman Liberty (with her *pileus* and *vindicta*) and worshiping at the sacred flame on her altar. Charles Rollin's *Histoire ancienne* (1731–1738) and *Histoire romaine* (1738–1748) fed a ravenous popular demand.[131] A Roman sensibility dominated the

architecture,[132] sculpture,[133] and rhetoric of French, English, American, and most European public life, although rarely was an openly "republican" position embraced.[134] What changed in North America in 1776 and in France in 1792 was the public's willingness to believe that republican government would be possible in modern times, with all its checks and balances and without the hereditary principle.[135]

The French republic, when it finally emerged, quickly repeated five hundred years of Roman history in a decade. From a self-styled Brutus (Desmoulins) to the pseudo-Gracchus (Babeuf) and would-be Caesar or Augustus (Bonaparte), French politicians reenacted the evolution and eventual destruction of the Roman Republic in the blood of their own citizens, to the amazement, inspiration, and eventual horror of Europe. The French experience seemed to confirm all the doubts of Tacitus, Montesquieu, and Rousseau that republican government could ever be recreated after Rome, or survive very long if it was. But the United States did survive, and American republicans had predicted the republican failure in France.[136] The French republicans' excesses could be attributed to their inattention to the traditional checks and balances of the republican form of government on the Roman model, or so many surviving republicans believed.[137] Others blamed their inherent corruption as Frenchmen.[138] Like Rome itself, France found an imperial solution to republican anarchy, ignoring checks and balances in favor of a plebiscitary dictatorship, which discredited the republican tradition in Europe for almost a century afterward.[139]

French advocates of Roman checks and balances appear to have had their chance to make republican government work in the failed constitutions of 1791, 1793, 1795, and 1799, all of which tinkered with limited magistrates, deliberative senates, and representative popular assemblies. In fact, French government seemed to move (in form at least) ever closer to the Roman model – beginning with a constitutional monarchy and unicameral assembly (1791), then replacing the monarch with an executive council (1793), adding a second chamber in the legislature (1795), and finally creating "consuls," "tribunes," and a senate-for-life (1799). In reality, none of the French constitutions ever had a chance to take hold, and the various "Senatus-consultes" and "Proclamations des Consuls" that made Napoléon Bonaparte a consul for life and eventually emperor discredited Roman vocabulary for subsequent generations in France.[140] The old republican advocates of checks and balances and liberty now called themselves "liberals" and turned their attention to individual rights.[141] What later French politicians remembered as "republican," for good or ill, were the unicameral expressions

of the "general will" made in the manner of Jean-Jacques Rousseau by the National Convention and the Constituent Assemblies,[142] along with Robespierre's vain attempts to inculcate civic virtue on the Spartan model during his own brief ascendancy.[143]

The French and American revolutions changed subsequent conceptions of republican government, and divided the republican tradition, by creating their own inspiring republican narratives to supersede the histories of Rome. Of course, the Roman model remained, so long as students read Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus in school,[144] but the American republic now provided a more contemporary example of successful republican government, and one as yet without the final failure of Rome.[145] The French republican tradition after Robespierre differed from Roman practice mostly in disparaging the senate.[146] When France returned to bicameralism at the end of the nineteenth century, it did so under American influence, against the grain of its own "republican" tradition and without reference to Rome.[147]

The essence of republican government, as French and American revolutionaries in the late eighteenth century knew from the example of Rome, was government for the common good, through the rule of law, under a sovereign people, guided by magistrates that they had elected themselves. The "republican form of government," more respected in the United States than in France but much discussed in both nations, controlled the powers of the magistrates, the senate, and the public assemblies by balancing their responsibilities in the manner of republican Rome. Both France and the United States replaced the direct democracy of the Roman *comitia* with elected representative assemblies, and they denigrated "democracy" generally as tumultuous, partisan, and ill-conceived.[148] This old opposition between "Roman" republicanism and "Greek" democracy diminished with time as French politicians forgot Rousseau's distinction between the sovereign people and their government.[149] Americans in the southern states also turned to "democracy" in the early nineteenth century as they embraced French speculation about the benefits of Greek slavery[150] to justify their own slave power in the face of emerging "republican" opposition.[151]

The history and institutions of the Roman Republic gave French and American republicans the courage and vocabulary to pursue their own independence nearly two millennia after Cato's death in Utica extinguished republican liberty in the ancient world.[152] The French and American cry of "liberty" was a call for the equal citizenship under law that Europeans remembered as the final legacy of Rome. French and American politicians had drawn slightly different conclusions

from the civil conflicts that ended the Republic – the Americans followed Cicero in strengthening the senate, the French followed Sallust in somewhat weakening its power – but both embraced the Roman aim (as they remembered it) of serving the common good through popular sovereignty, balanced representative government, and the rule of law.

At the end of the American Revolution, after the colonists had defeated the British king (with French help) and earned their nation's independence, the officers of the Continental Army returned, unpaid and unappreciated, to their separate homes and farms. Steeped in the republican ethos, they did not revolt against their mistreatment but took the name of "Cincinnati," after Rome's great general Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who had also returned to his plough after victory and without reward. Their motto recalled their sacrifice and the debt that American liberty owed to Latin education in the schools: *omnia reliquit servare rempublicam.*[153] Modern republicans found both their morals and their constitution in the old republican legacy of Rome.

NOTES

1 George Washington, *The First Inaugural Speech* (April 30, 1789), in W. B. Allen, ed., *George Washington: A Collection* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), p. 462.

2 Mocked by Thomas Moore: "Where tribunes rule, where dusky Dari bow, and what was Goose-Creek once is Tiber now." The poem is discussed by Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 50.

3 George Washington, *First Inaugural*, p. 462.

4 "Publius" [Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison], *The Federalist: A Collection of Essays Written in Favour of the New Constitution*, 2 vols. (New York: J. and A. McLean, 1788).

5 Letter of James Madison to James K. Paulding, July 24, 1818, in Gaillard Hunt, ed., *The Writings of James Madison*, 9 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900–1910), vol. 8, pp. 410–11.

6 Camille Desmoulins, *Histoire des Brissotins ou Fragment de l'histoire secrète de la Révolution* (1793), in Jules Claretie, ed., *Oeuvres de Camille Desmoulins*, vol. 1, p. 309. See also H. T. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity in the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1937); Claude Mossé, *L'antiquité dans la Révolution française* (Paris, 1989).

7 "Publius" [Alexander Hamilton], *Federalist*, IX. See M. N. S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* (Basingstoke, England: Macmillan; New York: New York University Press, 1994); M. N. S. Sellers, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: Repubicanism, Liberalism and the Law* (Basingstoke, England: Macmillan; New York: New York University Press, 1998).

8 William R. Everdell, *The End of Kings: A History of Republics and Republicanism* (New York: The Free Press, 1983).

9 Cornelius Tacitus, *Ab excessu divi Augusti annalium libri*, 1.2; Titus Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.1.1.
10 Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, Part II (1792), in Bruce Kuklick, ed., *Paine: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 168.
11 For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (1762) II.6, ed. Henri Guillemin (Paris: U.G.E., 1973), p. 99.
12 John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, 3 vols. (London: C. Dilly, 1787–8), at I. 125.
13 Titus Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.1.1.
14 Adams, *Defence*, at 1.126, quoting James Harrington, *The Commonweath of Oceana* (1659). See J. G. A. Pocock, ed., *Harrington: The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 8.
15 Harrington, *Oceana*, p. 8.
16 Adams, *Defence*, at 1.126.
17 Harrington, *Oceana*, p. 8; Donato Giannotti, *Libro della republica de' Viniziani* (1540), in Giannotti, *Opere* (Pisa, 1819).
18 Cornelius Tacitus, *Ab excessu divi Augusti annalium libri*, 1.2.
19 Thomas Gordon, *The Works of Tacitus* (London, 1728–31). See also John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious* (1724), Letter 65, "*jura omnium in se traxit*," in Ronald Hamowy, ed., *Cato's Letters*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), vol. 1, p. 458.
20 Josiah Quincy's will, written in 1774, left his son "when he shall arrive at the age of fifteen years" Algernon Sidney's works, John Locke's works, Lord Bacon's works, Gordon's *Tacitus*, and Cato's *Letters*. "May the spirit of liberty rest upon him." Quoted in Meyer Reinhold, *The Classick Pages: Classical Readings of Eighteenth-Century Americans* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), p. 100.
21 See, e.g., J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Movement: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).
22 See, e.g., Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth-Century England* (Evanston, III.: Northwestern University Press, 1945); Caroline A. Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealth's Man: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War of the Thirteen Colonies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).
23 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651) II.21, in Richard Tuck, *Hobbes: Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 150.
24 See, e.g., Biancamaria Fontana, ed., *The Invention of the Modern Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); H. A. L. Fisher, *The Republican Tradition in Europe* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911); Sellers, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*.
25 Hamowy, ed., *Cato's Letters*, vol. 1, p. 14 (preface).
26 Ibid., Letter 37, vol. 1, p. 262.
27 G. Vertue, *Medals, Coins, Great-Seals, Impressions, from the Elaborate Works of Thomas Simon, Chief Engraver of the Mint to Charles the 1st, to the Commonwealth, the Lord Protector Cromwell, and in the Reign of King Charles the IInd to 1665* (London: 1753), plate XVIII.

28 See, e.g., *Respublica v. Ross*, December Term, 1795, reported in A. J. Dallas, *Reports of Cases Ruled and Adjudged in the Several Courts of the United States and of Pennsylvania Held at the Seat of the Federal Government*, ed. E. C. Brightly (New York: Banks, 1903), vol. 2, p. 239.
29 *Plan and Frame of Government for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (September 28, 1776) in F. N. Thorpe, ed., *Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters and Other Organic Laws*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1909), p. 3084.
30 Adams, *Defence*, at I.208.
31 Republican Society, *To The Citizens of Pennsylvania* in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, March 23, 1779, on the first and last pages. See also Benjamin Rush, *Observations upon the Present Government of Pennsylvania in Four Letters to the People of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1777).
32 See, e.g., Charles de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, *De l'espirit des lois* (1748), at I.iv.6, in R. Derathé, ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1973), vol. 1, p. 43. Cf. François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Lettres écrites de Londres sur les Anglais et autres sujets* (Basel, 1734).
33 Adams, *Defence*, at I.208. "The Constitution of England is in truth a republic, and has been ever so considered by foreigners, and by the most learned and enlightened Englishman."
34 Ibid., at III.504–5.
35 Tacitus, *Annalium libri*, 4.33.
36 Tacitus, *Historiarum libri*, 1.16:
37 Montesquieu, *De l'espirit des lois*, at I.8.16. Cf. Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (Amsterdam: J. Desbordes, 1734).
38 John Adams, *Defence*, at I.125: "*Imperia legum potentiora fuerunt quam hominum.*"
39 Charles Lee, *Letter to Robert Morris*, August 15, 1782, in *Lee Papers* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1872–1875), vol. 4, p. 26.
40 See "Sallust and Corruption" in M. N. S. Sellers, *American Republicanism* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), pp. 87–9. For the classical reading of eighteenth-century Americans, see Reinhold, *The Classick Pages*.
41 Adams, *Defence*, at I.128.
42 For example, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In M. Antonium orationes Philippicae*, 4.4.8.
43 *New York Journal*, September 6, 1787, in John P. Kaminski and Gaspare J. Saladino, eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, vol. 13, *Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981), p. 137.
44 *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 25, 1787, in Kaminski and Saladino, XIII. 144.
45 *New York Journal*, September 27, 1787, in Gaspare and Saladino, XIII.255.
46 *New York Daily Advertiser*, September 29, 1787, in Gaspare and Saladino, XIII.268.
47 *New York Journal*, October 18, 1787, in Gaspare and Saladino, XIII.411.
48 *New York Independent Journal*, October 27, 1787, in Gaspare and Saladino, XIII.486.
49 *New York Journal*, November 1, 1787, in Gaspare and Saladino, XIII. 529.
50 See Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Maurizio Viroli, *Republicanism*, trans. A. Shugaar (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002).
51 See John Adams, *Report of the Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (1779), in C. Bradley Thompson, ed., *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), pp. 297–322.

52 Adams, *Defence*, at I.xviii.
53 Ibid., at I.ii.
54 Ibid., at I.iii.
55 Ibid., at I.xvi.
56 Ibid., at I.xvi; Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De re publica*, 2.23.41: "*. . . statu esse optimo constitutam rem publicam, quae ex tribus generibus illis, regali et optumati et populari, confusa modice . . .*"
57 Adams, *Defence*, at I.xvii; Cicero, *De re publica*, 2.42.69: "*ut enim in fidibus aut tibiis atque ut in cantu ipso ac vocibus concentus est quidam tenendus ex distinctis sonis, . . . sic ex summis et infimis et mediis interiectis ordinibus ut sonis moderata ratione civitas consensu dissimillimorum concinit.*"
58 Adams, *Defence*, at I.xviii; Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.25.39: "*respublica res [est] populi, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus.*"
59 Adams, *Defence*, at I.xviii.
60 Ibid., at I.xvii.
61 Ibid. "His decided opinion in favour of three branches is founded on a reason that is unchangeable."
62 Sydney George Fisher, *The Evolution of the Constitution of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1897); D. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).
63 Adams, *Defence*, at I.xix.
64 "Publius" [James Madison], *Federalist*, X.
65 Ibid., LXIII (Madison's italics).
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., X.
68 Ibid., LXII.
69 Adams, *Defence*, at I.98.
70 Ibid., at I.93.
71 Ibid., at I.99.
72 Ibid., Letter XXX, at I.169–76.
73 Kaminski and Saladino, *Documentary History*, at XIII.83–5.
74 Adams, *Defence*, at I.171–3.
75 *The Constitution of the United States* (1787), Article II. 1.
76 Ibid., Article II.2.
77 Ibid., Article I.8.
78 Adams, *Defence*, at I.175.
79 *The Constitution of the United States* (1787), Article IV. 4.
80 The Republican party cited the guarantee clause in opposition to Southern slavery. William Wiecek, *The Guarantee Clause of the United States Constitution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972); William Weicek, *The Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism in America, 1760–1848* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).
81 See Adams, *Defence*, at I.124.
82 His *Letter to Dr. Price* of March 22, 1778 was published as an appendix to Richard Price, *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World* (Dublin: White, Whetstone, et al., 1785).

83 Abbé de Mably, *Observations sur le gouvernement et les lois des États-Unis d'Amérique* (Amsterdam, 1784).
84 Benjamin Constant, *De la liberté des anciens comparée à celle des modernes* (1819) (Paris: Hachette, 1980).
85 Montesquieu, *De l'espirit des lois*, at I.viii.16.
86 Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, at III. 1, 15.
87 Ibid., at II.9, III.15.
88 Ibid., at II.6.
89 Ibid., at II.1.
90 Ibid., at I.6.
91 Ibid., at I.7.
92 Cf. ibid, at I.8: "*L'obéissance á la loi qu'on s'est prescrite est liberté.*"
93 Ibid., at II.3.
94 Ibid., at III. 15.
95 Ibid., at II.3.
96 Ibid., at II.7.
97 Ibid., at III.4.
98 Ibid., at II.6.
99 Ibid., at II.7.
100 Ibid., at II. 12.
101 As Niccolò Machiavelli had famously observed not only of the French but also of the Spanish and the Italians in his *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (1517), at I.55.
102 Ibid., at III.8.
103 Ibid., III.4.
104 Adams, *Defence*, at III.505.
105 Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, at I.55. Machiavelli was a major source for the continental preoccupation with virtue as a precondition to any successful republic. See Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On the adoption of republican checks and balances by princes and kings, see Adams, *Defence*, at I.i.
106 Charles I, *XIX Propositions Made by Both Houses of Parliament, to the King's Most Excellent Majestie: With His Majesties Answer Thereunto* (York, 1642), in Joyce Lee Malcolm, ed., *The Struggle for Sovereignty: Seventeenth-Century English Political Tracts* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), pp. 167–71.
107 *Cato's Letters*, preface, at I.15.
108 Ibid., at I.31.
109 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), introduction in Kuklick, ed., *Paine*, p. 2.
110 Ibid., chap. 1, p. 6.
111 Patrice Gueniffey, "Cordeliers and Girondins: The Prehistory of the Republic," in Fontana, *Invention*, pp. 86–106; Ran Halévi, "La république monarchique," in François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds., *Le siècle de l'avènement républicain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), pp. 165–96.
112 *Les Révolutions de Paris*, issue of June 12–19, 1790.
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114 Keith Michael Baker, "Fixing the French Constitution," in *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 250–305.
115 Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, at II.6 (with his notes).
116 Ibid., at I.8.
117 Ibid., at III.5.
118 Ibid., at III.6.
119 Ibid., at III. 8.13.
120 Ibid., at III. 12.
121 Ibid., at III. 15.
122 Ibid., at IV.2.
123 "Publius" [Madison], *Federalist*, X.
124 Adams, *Defence*, at I.132.
125 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, at II. 11.4.
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128 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, at II. 11.14.
129 Ibid., at II.11.17.
130 Robert L. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, "Brutus" and the French Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).
131 Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism* (London: Pelican, 1968).
132 Giles Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain: The Heroic Age* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).
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135 For the explosion of republican imagery in France after 1791, see Jacque Boineau, *Les toges de pouvoir (1789–1799) ou la révolution de droit antique* (Toulouse: Editions Eché, 1986).
136 For example, Adams, *Defence*, at I.128–9.
137 Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, *Des circonstances actuelles qui peuvent terminer la Révolution et des principes qui doivent fonder la République en France*, ed. Lucia Omacini (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979).
138 Constant, *De la liberté.*
139 For a recent discussion of the evolution of French views of the republic in this period, see Keith Michael Baker, "Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): 32 f.
140 The documents implementing this transformation are gathered in Dominique Colas, ed., *Textes constitutionnels français et étrangers* (Paris: Larousse, 1994).
141 See Sellers, *Sacred Fire of Liberty.*
142 Claude Nicolet, *L'idée républicaine en France (1789–1924): Essai d'histoire critique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Serge Berstein and Odile Rudelle, eds., *Le modèle républicain* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992).
143 The best discussion of this is still Harold T. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries: A Study in the Development of the Revolutionary Spirit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), chap. 11–13, esp. chap. 11, "The Problem of Regeneration."

144 Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984).

145 Natalio R. Botana, *La tradición republicana: Alberdi, Sarmiento y las ideas políticas de su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1984).

146 Nicolet, *L'idée républicaine*, p. 172.

147 See, e.g., Edouard Laboulaye, *Esquisse d'une constitution républicaine suivie d'un projet de constitution* (Paris, 1872); John Bigelow, *Some Recollections of the Late Edouard Laboulaye* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1888).

148 For example, "Publius" [Madison], *Federalist, X;* Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* at III.4.

149 Rousseau, *Du contrat social,* at III.1.

150 Ibid., at III. 15.

151 Achille Murat, *A Moral and Political Sketch of the United States of America* (London: 1833). Cf. George Fitzhugh, *Slavery Justified by a Southerner* (Fredericksburg, 1850) in Eric L.McKittrick, ed., *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 42–4. Article IV Section 4 of the United States Constitution, guaranteeing every state in the Union a "republican" form of government, had become the basis on which many abolitionists denied the constitutionality of slavery in the United States. See Wiecek, *Antislavery Constitutionalism.*

152 Joseph Addison's *Cato* was George Washington's favorite play, and he had it performed in 1778 for the American troops at Valley Forge. Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), pp. 133–7; Carl J. Richard, *Founders and the Classics*, p. 58.

153 Minor Myers, Jr., *Liberty without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983).