



Rome's Last Citizen: The Life and Legacy of Cato, Mortal Enemy of Caesar

By Rob Goodman, Jimmy Soni

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"**Cato, history's most famous foe of authoritarian power**, was the pivotal political man of Rome; an inspiration to our Founding Fathers; and a cautionary figure for our times. He loved Roman republicanism, but saw himself as too principled for the mere politics that might have saved it. His life and lessons are urgently relevant in the harshly divided America?and world?of today. With erudition and verve, Rob Goodman and Jimmy Soni turn their life of Cato into the most modern of biographies, **a blend of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and Game Change**."?Howard Fineman, Editorial Director of The Huffington Post Media Group, NBC and MSNBC News Analyst, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Thirteen American Arguments*

"**A truly outstanding piece of work.** What most impresses me is the book's ability to reach through the confusing dynastic politics of the late Roman Republic to present social realities in a way intelligible to the modern reader. *Rome's Last Citizen* entertainingly restores to life the stoic Roman who inspired George Washington, Patrick Henry and Nathan Hale. This is more than a biography: it is a study of how a reputation lasted through the centuries from the end of one republic to the start of another."?David Frum, *DailyBeast* columnist, former White House speech writer, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Right Man*

Marcus Porcius Cato: aristocrat who walked barefoot and slept on the ground with his troops, political heavyweight who cultivated the image of a Stoic philosopher, a hardnosed defender of tradition who presented himself as a man out of the sacred Roman past?and the last man standing when Rome's Republic fell to tyranny. His blood feud with Caesar began in the chamber of the Senate, played out on the battlefields of a world war, and ended when he took his own life rather than live under a dictator.

Centuries of thinkers, writers, and artists have drawn inspiration from Cato's Stoic courage. Saint Augustine and the early Christians were moved and challenged by his example. Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, chose Cato to preside over the souls who arrive in Purgatory. George Washington so revered him that

he staged a play on Cato's life to revive the spirit of his troops at Valley Forge. Now, in *Rome's Last Citizen*, Rob Goodman and Jimmy Soni deliver the first modern biography of this stirring figure.

Cato's life is a gripping tale that resonates deeply with our own turbulent times. He grappled with terrorists, a debt crisis, endemic political corruption, and a huge gulf between the elites and those they governed. In many ways, Cato was the ultimate man of principle—he even chose suicide rather than be used by Caesar as a political pawn. But Cato was also a political failure: his stubbornness sealed his and Rome's defeat, and his lonely end casts a shadow on the recurring hope that a singular leader can transcend the dirty business of politics.

Rome's Last Citizen is a timeless story of an uncompromising man in a time of crisis and his lifelong battle to save the Republic.

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Editorial Review

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Cato the Younger, who famously committed suicide in 46 BCE rather than submit to Julius Caesar, symbolized republican liberty to both contemporaries like Cicero, who wrote a lost panegyric, and American patriots like George Washington, who staged Addison's Cato at Valley Forge. Suspecting that the actual Cato might not completely sustain the idealized version, Goodman and Soni set the Stoic senator amid the convulsions of the late Roman Republic. Summarizing Cato as "a lifelong project of calculated anachronism," they show him upholding strict adherence to Rome's constitution, inveighing against money's corruption of elections and trials, and setting an example of probity in his management of the state treasury and the province of Cyprus. But in an era of populist tumult and riots in the Forum, Cato's republican rectitude resulted in serial political defeats. It's in private that Cato seems less perfect and more real as Goodman and Soni speculate about, for example, Cato's divorce and remarriage to the same woman. Written in flowing, nonacademic prose, this biography suits the never-waning popular interest in the dramas of ancient Roman history. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"Effectively the first-ever modern biography of Cato. The writing is excellent, the stories unforgettable, and the lessons practical." ?*Tim Ferriss on FourHourWorkWeek.com*

"[This] wise and lively book offers two lessons: first, knowing modern politics can yield insight into study of the ancient world; and second, Rome still has lessons to teach us today." ?*City Journal*

"The authors succeed brilliantly in bringing this fascinating statesman to life." ?*Kirkus Reviews*

"In a rare modern biography of Marcus Cato the Younger, a rival of both Caesar and Pompey, Goodman, formerly a Democratic speechwriter, and Soni (managing editor, Huffington Post) argue that understanding Cato and the many legends surrounding him will help readers understand both the current American political climate and contemporary notions of freedom...there are great moments here: Cato, struggling in Utica after the defeats at Pharsalus and Thapsus, is revealed in all his flawed humanity. Where others (e.g. Adrian Goldsworthy in *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*) are inclined to view Cato as a hypocrite, using his virtue and stoicism as another tack to rise in the high-stakes world of late Republic Rome power politics, Goodman and Soni take a more nuanced approach, broaching many questions, never answering firmly. This makes for a more revealing portrait of a real man and demonstrates just how much a symbol Cato has become." ?*Library Journal*

"Written in flowing, nonacademic prose, this biography suits the never-waning popular interest in the dramas of ancient Roman history." ?*Booklist*

"This well-paced and dramatic book narrates the controversial life and political and moral legacy of Marcus Porcius Cato...They [the authors] give their account depth by closely grounding it in the ancient sources, and their experience in and knowledge of modern politics adds special value to their assessments of Cato... indeed frankly describing his flaws as a politician and a man....As the opening discussion shows and the main narrative confirms, there is indeed a lot worth thinking about in deciding what should be the lessons to draw from Cato's life and legacy." ?*History Book Club*

“Well-crafted retelling of the life of Cato” ?*The New American*

“Goodman and Soni's examination of Cato the Younger--the Roman reactionary, Stoic, and enemy of Caesar--is the story of a harsh man in a violent age. With his pronounced British accent, Derek Perkins is a surprising choice for narration as this book seems directed at an American audience. But his voice is strong, and he sets the pace like someone leading a brisk, invigorating jog. The slightly cynical, skeptical edge of his tone fits the text, which refuses to take Cato at his own saintly face value or to respect the turbulent "banana republic" of Rome. His edgy take fits both Cato's troubled republic and (despite the accent) our own, which is part of the book's point. Perkins's vigorous performance helps keep this an absorbing program.”

?AudioFile (starred review)

“When the Roman Republic finally fell, the last man standing was Cato, staunch defender of old Rome's venerable legacy and enemy of Caesar's new world order. Thanks to Goodman and Soni, this rare creature--a politician of honor willing to die for his principles--steps out of the shadows into history again. Illuminating and timely!” ?*Adrienne Mayor, Stanford University, National Book Award finalist for The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome's Deadliest Enemy*

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“Cato's life always had epic dimensions in his own mind. His principled, gory suicide made him a symbol of liberty for two thousand years, the model for George Washington and many others. Jimmy Soni and Rob Goodman have somehow given us a life of Cato that is neither hero-worshiping nor debunking. Instead, this handsomely written biography is vividly intelligent and valuably reflective. It is a very fine treatment of a life worth knowing, and a valuable meditation on how a life becomes a myth.” ?*Jedediah Purdy, professor of law at Duke University, author of For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today and Being America: Liberty, Commerce and Violence in an American World*

“Cato, an icon to the founding fathers, has become a neglected figure. In their spirited new biography--the first since Plutarch!--Rob Goodman and Jimmy Soni give us his story, and explain why this Roman statesman meant so much to our political forbearers.” ?*Jacob Weisberg, chairman and editor-in-chief of the Slate Group and New York Times bestselling author of The Bush Tragedy*

About the Author

ROB GOODMAN has worked as the speechwriter for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and Senator Chris Dodd. He has written speeches and opinion pieces that have appeared on the floors of both houses of Congress, on national television and radio, and in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. JIMMY SONI is the managing editor of *The Huffington Post* and a former speechwriter,

whose writing and commentary have appeared in *The Atlantic* online and on NPR, among other outlets.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Curt Roepke:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book allowed Rome's Last Citizen: The Life and Legacy of Cato, Mortal Enemy of Caesar? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have additional opinion?

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