

The creation and publication of the Twelve Tables was a key moment in the Roman Republic. In the Conflict of the Orders, plebeians demanded changes in society and the political structure. They sought recognition of their rights as citizens and a check on the unrivaled power of the patrician class. One of the significant changes to arise from the conflict was passage of the Twelve Tables, a set of laws which were engraved in copper and permanently displayed. Although the statutes themselves might not have been particularly liberal or truly revolutionary, the codification of Roman law was significant as it listed formally established standards for behavior. However, the Tables were radical as they ensured that Roman citizens, regardless of political status or wealth, were subject to the same rules. The Twelve Tables began to establish principles of equality between plebeians and patricians that would help to lay the groundwork for a truer equality, when the plebeian council's decisions were made applicable to the entire population, just over a century and a half later. *The World of Rome* indicates that the Twelve Tables were not substantially helpful for ordinary citizens, but they did mark an "important development" by removing the interpretation of the law from a sole, exclusive group that could make decisions based on tradition and instead placing judicial responsibility in a "clear and unambiguous set of remedies." The passage of the Twelve Tables, while not necessarily changing regular life, redefined power in Rome. The Tables gave citizens, at least theoretically, equal status in the eyes of the law. Furthermore, judicial power was no longer vested in an elite group of

was no longer vested in an elite group of patricians, but decisions were instead left to an impartial code that could not give one case favor over another. Additionally, the Twelve Tables reshaped Roman culture, implying that all citizens had the right to equal protection under the law. In this, the Tables firmly established ideals of equality that would be reflected in the creation of the office of the tribunes and the *concilium plebis*. The Tables would also influence society later in history, as Kamm notes that the codes, "professionally drafted and precisely stated in terms which demonstrate the Roman aptitude for legal expression,... constitute the starting point of European as well as Roman law." Thus the Twelve Tables proved instrumental in not only shaping ancient Roman society, but societies that would arise centuries in the future. Therefore, the institution of the Twelve Tables was an important moment in the days of the .early Roman Republic