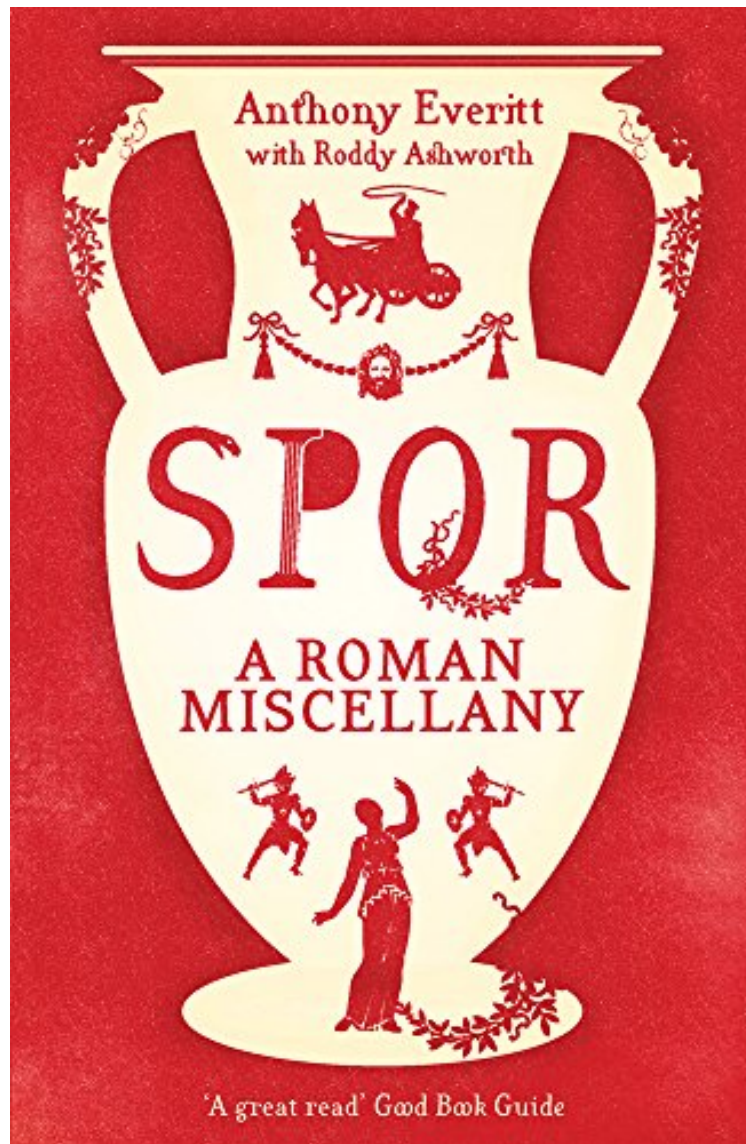


(Download pdf) Spqr: A Roman Miscellany

Spqr: A Roman Miscellany

Anthony Everitt

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Anthony Everitt : Spqr: A Roman Miscellany before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spqr: A Roman Miscellany:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy lccA stellar author.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Buy itBy milahan williamsWitty and a great read4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Lively and bizarre - the quirks of the ancient Roman worldBy JeriDid they really have vomitoriums? No. And what about dining - did everybody lie down for a meal in a wealthy man's home? As it turns out, the men did but if any

women attended, they were relegated to chairs. The Romans felt suicide was a noble death. Petronius, the author of the "Satyricon" made suicide into a lighthearted evening. "He severed his hands and then bandaged them at will" (p 121) so he could enjoy a pleasant banquet as he died, chatting and joking with friends, sometimes rewarding, and sometimes punishing, his slaves. Slaves were everywhere. "Varro, who lived in the first century BC called them 'tools that can speak'" (p 279). Being a slave to a prosperous patrician in Rome could be a decent living, depending on the master, especially if he liked you and gave you your freedom eventually. But life as a slave on a farm, or worst of all, in the mines, could be a fast death sentence. The ancient birth control was the plant silphium, which was so desired that "it appears to have died out as a consequence of over-harvesting" (p 114). Today, nobody knows if it really worked. Brothels were legal and everywhere, and some had pretty women and some had pretty boys, depending on your preference. For women, it was fashionable to have very white skin, perhaps because it proved you were not a slave who worked outside, but alas, to get that white skin women relied on a makeup consisting of white lead. Which was very poisonous. And here is a beauty preference you don't hear a lot about today: "Romans liked black eyebrows that almost met in the center" (p 246). To get them, they used soot and antimony...another poison. Rouge came from seaweed. Go figure. And their eye shadow came in many different colors, including malachite, a pretty green color which was....you guessed it....poisonous. Roman religion consisted, first and foremost, in blood. "It's hard to exaggerate the centrality of the ceremonial killing of animals to Roman religious activity" (p 88). Each ceremony had to be performed exactly. Once, a ceremony had to be repeated thirty times until it was done exactly. The Romans were highly superstitious, with many of their religious ceremonies regarded more as bribes to the gods to keep their luck going. Every day life as sprinkled with superstitious beliefs, especially if you were doing something potentially dangerous, such as setting off on a voyage. . You didn't dare sneeze on a ship. Very unlucky. "If the weather was fine, no one on board should cut their hair or nails; but a storm god could be appeased if you threw clippings or locks into the sea" (p 209). Whether you are someone with no background in ancient history, or an avid follower of Everitt's wonderful biographies of famous Romans, you will have fun reading 'SPQR'.

From the acclaimed author of Augustus, Cicero, and The Rise of Rome, an entertaining and richly informative miscellany of facts about Rome and the Roman world SPQR: Senatus Populusque Romanus. Do you know to what use the Romans put the excrement of the kingfisher? Or why a dinner party invitation from the emperor Domitian was such a terrifying prospect? Or why Roman women smelled so odd? The answers to these questions can be found in this compendium of extraordinary facts and anecdotes about ancient Rome and its Empire. The 500-odd entries range across every area of Roman life and society, from the Empress Livia's cure for tonsillitis to the most reliable Roman methods of contraception.

'For those inclined to ask what the Romans ever did for us, this is the perfect response. Broken down into themes it gives a pithy and concise look at aspects of Roman life ... a great read, and a single-volume primer for Roman history and culture' The Good Book Guide. About the Author Anthony Everitt is the author of Augustus: The Life of Rome's First Emperor, Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician, and The Rise of Rome.