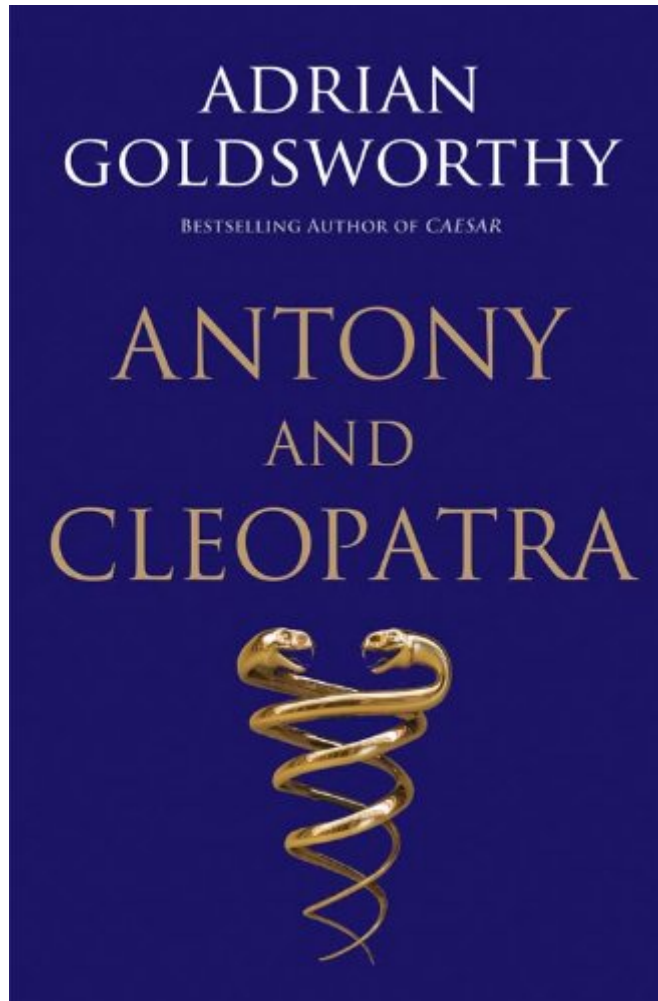




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Antony And Cleopatra



Synopsis

In this remarkable dual biography of the two great lovers of antiquity, preeminent historian Adrian Goldsworthy goes beyond myth and romance to create a nuanced and historically acute portrayal of his subjects, set against the political backdrop of their time. A history of lives lived intensely at a time when the world was changing profoundly, the book takes readers on a journey that crosses cultures and boundaries from ancient Greece and ancient Egypt to the Roman Empire. Drawing on his prodigious knowledge of the ancient world and his keen sense of the period's military and political history, Goldsworthy creates a singular portrait of the iconic lovers. "Antony and Cleopatra were first and foremost political animals," explains Goldsworthy, who places politics and ideology at the heart of their storied romance. Undertaking a close analysis of ancient sources and archaeological evidence, Goldsworthy bridges the gaps of current scholarship and dispels misconceptions that have entered the popular consciousness. He explains why Cleopatra was consistently portrayed by Hollywood as an Egyptian, even though she was really Greek, and argues that Antony had far less military experience than anyone would suspect from reading Shakespeare and other literature. Goldsworthy makes an important case for understanding Antony as a powerful Roman senator and political force in his own right. A masterfully told and deeply human story of love, politics, and ambition, Goldsworthy's Antony and Cleopatra delivers a compelling reassessment of a major episode in ancient history.

Book Information

File Size: 2055 KB

Print Length: 480 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press (September 3, 2010)

Publication Date: September 3, 2010

Language: English

ASIN: B0041T4A2A

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #172,146 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #6

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Customer Reviews

"Antony and Cleopatra" is another excellent work by Adrian Goldsworthy. His grasp of the ancient world is stunning and his ability to relate its history to the modern reader is unmatched. He brings Antony and Cleopatra to life as real people and dispels the incorrect assumptions and beliefs that surround them. While they may have loved one another, their relationship was much more complicated and interesting. Their political (and in Antony's case, psychological) needs were always paramount. Antony is revealed as a needy boy in a man's body, who had little ability as a strategist and military commander, but who had an enormous appetite for worldly pleasures. Cleopatra is shown to have been very astute politically, and whose primary goal was to remain in power and keep Egypt as independent as possible. This book is a must read for all who are interested in ancient Rome, the transition from Roman Republic to Empire, Antony, Cleopatra, or Octavian. Speaking of Octavian, I can't help but wonder what would have happened if Cleopatra had tried to seduce him instead of Antony. Considering Octavian's strict Roman elitism, I doubt it would have gone well for Cleopatra.

Let's face it; there is nothing much new here in historical terms, but Mr. Goldsworthy's insights and reinterpretations of fact make this a first rate book, particularly in his portrayal of Antony - always a very illusive character. Goldsworthy paints him as an entitled aristocrat with little more going for him other than privilege and bloodthirstiness. (In other words, a Mafia Don). He paints Cleopatra boldly as well, and for the first time offers up the compelling argument that she was never more than a pale attendant to Antony's supreme power. Films and novels paint her as the prime motivator, but Goldsworthy quite rightly states that she would be nothing of historical note without Antony's favor. Crisp and insightful, and a very easy read.. .

A most excellent book. Goldsworthy's is a judicious examination of the historical record. His intention is to present what is actually known about Antony and Cleopatra rather than to simply bolster the mythic figures that have come to be associated with the names. Of particular interest are Goldsworthy's thoughtful explorations of Antony's military ventures and Cleopatra's political maneuvering. A plus: that he presents, at various points, alternate possible explanations of

episodes based on available (limited) historical evidence, and then gives solid reasons for the explanation that he favors. A highlight of the volume: his outstanding analyses of the battles of Philippi and Actium.

No one writes history as interestingly as Goldsworthy. I've read each of his books and he continues to consistently present history in a factual but entertaining way. Excellent insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Antony as well as a full scope background of the Roman Republic in upheaval. Cleopatra is presented as a, "ruler," intent on keeping Egypt intact and prospering under the Roman empire. A very well-written book.

Adrian Goldsworthy is one of my favorite historical writers. He researches all of his writings well. We all know the story about Antony and Cleopatra but his diligent research on this subject has added some new light into the end of the Roman Republic and the last of the Egyptian pharaohs. Here's one book I could easily read again and enjoy it more the second time.

Lots of punctuation errors and lots of repetition could not squelch my enthusiasm for all things Goldsworthy. Fascinating subject treated by a fascinating scholar. Thoroughly enjoyable.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book and was a good read after finishing biography about Julius Caesar. As for why, it helps fill in what happened after his death and how Anthony and Cleopatra proceed after his death. The writing style and the way the facts are presented made reading this book very easy. I recommend it to any history lover.

Goldsworthy does an excellent job of explaining the context of this romance and the consequences. Cleopatra is quite different than usually portrayed.

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