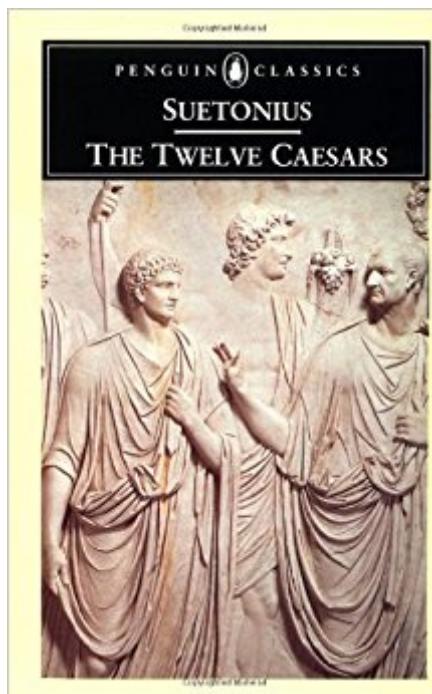


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The Twelve Caesars (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Covering the Roman rulers from Julius Caesar to Domitian, this remains one of the richest and most fascinating of all Latin histories. Suetonius gathered much of his information from eye-witnesses, checking his facts carefully and quoting conflicting evidence without bias. But his history is also the most vivid and the raciest account we have of scandalous and amusing incidents in the domestic lives of the first Caesars.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born in 60 A.D., Suetonius served for several years as secretary to the Roman emperor Hadrian. His years in the palaces and halls of imperial government served him well when he set out to write this oftentimes eye-popping, tell-all account of the doings of the first 12 emperors, from Julius to Domitian, who make the good fellas of Mafia renown seem tame by comparison. From Suetonius we learn that Augustus was afraid of lightning and thunder and carried a piece of seal skin as protection against them; that Caligula slept with his mother and his sister; and that Nero outlawed mimes in Rome--which may mean that he wasn't such a bad man after all. Suetonius doesn't hesitate to say when he's reporting gossip that he has not personally verified, but what gossip it is! This translation, by the noted classicist Robert Graves, serves the ancient chronicler very well indeed.

Text: English, Latin (translation)

I read Suetonius "The Twelve Caesars" in college and I decided to reread it. It is just as good as I remembered it. It provides us a glimpse into the past of Ancient Rome and the rulers who led one of the greatest empires in the world.

I have been a lover of history since junior high school. I recently became interested in ancient history after reading the book by Robert Graves, "I, Claudius." Since then I've been fascinated by all the historical events from the ancient world that seem to parallel our society today. In "The Twelve Caesars" by Suetonius, the author--a contemporary of that time period--gives a detailed account of the first twelve caesars of the Roman Empire. The histories are not just some vague attempts that depict all the major achievements of these men and the positive impacts they had on history, but rather, the book exposes all the details of their lives both good and bad and to what effect it had on the empire. In want for a better comparison I would have to say that it's a cross between The Washington Post and The National Enquirer. The book includes a glossary of terms of phrases and events common to that time period that the average reader might not know about. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in ancient history or in history in general.

The book was in new condition, delivered only days after purchase. The book is an amazing historical biography of the first twelve men who ruled the Roman empire, and portrays them honestly, without heroic blinders- their strengths and weaknesses. There is little question that they all lived in a very 'brutal' period in human history, and the politics of the time sure was deadly, both within, and outside, of families. This book would definitely appeal to history buffs, as well as anyone interested in the tiny city-state that became the greatest empire the world has ever known. Great read!

For its age, and considering the precarious time of its writing, the author shares some pretty remarkable anecdotes in The Twelve Caesars. Suetonius was regarded as a gossip, his stories are gloriously sensationalist - and for that reason, this may be the most entertaining, but least trustworthy ancient book you'll ever read. Suetonius covers Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. His biographies on Augustus and Nero, both required reading for my upper-level Flavian Rome class, are particularly good - Suetonius depicts a young Octavian being thoroughly humiliated by the elder Marc Antony, and it is in Suetonius that we read of Augustus crying "Give me back my legions!" Augustus' misdeeds,

however, pale in comparison to his successors. Nero's "biography" for example, is a catalog of depravities, not a chronological account. Penguin Classics are awesome. Bright paper, easy-to-read print. Well bound.

I wanted to learn more about the Caesars of Rome and this book makes the grade.

This is basically a gossip sheet from ancient Rome... the strengths and weaknesses of each Caesar. Not dry at all. Translation and commentary didn't get in the way of the story telling. The author is obviously a little biased which rulers he was sympathetic to, but that's interesting too. Enjoyed the perspective on what were considered virtues back then in that culture. Minus one star for the Kindle edition, this really needs an index and a linked table of contents. At least, I don't get those features reading on my smart phone using the Kindle app, not sure if they're available if reading on a real Kindle.

TWELVE CAESARS was drawn from the work of Suetonius (70 to 130), a Roman historian who lived and wrote during the Imperial era. Suetonius' writings about the Caesars are adapted to English by Robert Graves, the preeminent British author and mythographer who so well understood ancient times and antiquity. Suetonius included scandalous stories about the Caesars which greatly enliven the histories -- I learned much about classical times and my understanding has been broadened. I thoroughly enjoyed.....well written. TWELVE CAESARS is the only surviving work by Suetonius and "is the most fascinating and richest of all Latin histories."

Very insightful book. I find Roman history exceptionally enticing and alluring to read. From Julius Caesars idiosyncrasies, to Nero's repulsive actions- this book gives me a wonderful perspective of the Roman days. The biggest criticism of this book is Suetonius' style. I find the topical application is a little too shallow to deal with. The concept adopted here is not definitive of a biographical style of literature. Still, the style has its place if one is not into delving into the lives of these Roman leaders too deeply. Overall, quality book from an obvious genius.

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