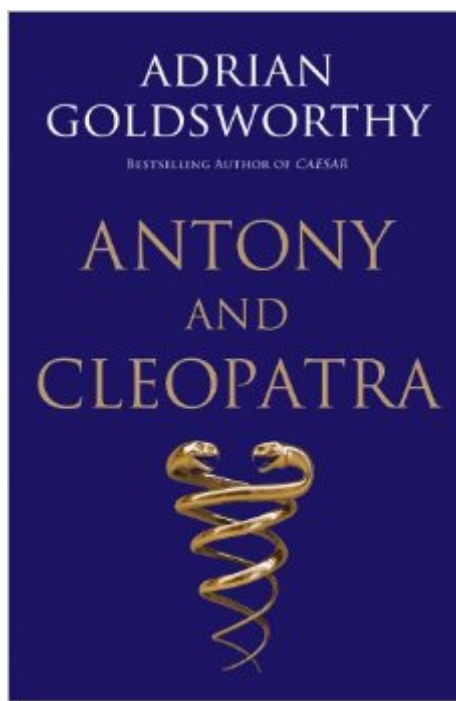


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Antony And Cleopatra



Synopsis

A masterfully told and deeply human story of love, politics, and ambition, Adrian Goldsworthy's *Antony and Cleopatra* delivers a compelling reassessment of a major episode in ancient history. In this remarkable dual biography of the two great lovers of the ancient world, 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been a fan of Adrian Goldsworthy's since his *How Rome Fell* so impressed me with its amazing

scholarship. Now, Goldsworthy tackles another ancient Roman subject that has teased the imagination of the public for generations: Antony and Cleopatra. For most of us, Cleopatra looks like Elizabeth Taylor; that movie is the extent of most common knowledge of the two ancient lovers. I have no idea how historically accurate the movie was (at least compared to the scholarship at the time of its production), but I'd be willing to guess that there is a lot in Goldsworthy's book that people not particularly interested in history don't know. As with *How Rome Fell* (the author is best known for *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*), the depth of Goldsworthy's research is remarkable. He covers not just the lives of these two players but also the Roman world in which they grew up, along with a brief history of their families - the Ptolemaic royal family descended from Alexander the Great and that resulted in Cleopatra's family line, and of Antony's well-known aristocratic family. Little is known about either childhood, but he gives us what he can, clearly noting where something is supported by historical document or whether it's suggested or inferred from what is known of the time period. Where supposition and speculation are involved, Goldsworthy never presents it as fact but as differing theories. It's interesting to explore these historical gray areas, but I like a historian who will present his view while not averring that his view is obvious fact.

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