



# SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome

By Mary Beard

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***New York Times* Bestseller • National Book Critics Circle Finalist • *Wall Street Journal* Best Books of 2015 • *Kirkus Reviews* Best Books of 2015 • *Economist* Books of the Year 2015 • *New York Times Book Review* 100 Notable Books of 2015**

**A sweeping, "magisterial" history of the Roman Empire from one of our foremost classicists shows why Rome remains "relevant to people many centuries later" (*Atlantic*).**

In *SPQR*, an instant classic, Mary Beard narrates the history of Rome "with passion and without technical jargon" and demonstrates how "a slightly shabby Iron Age village" rose to become the "undisputed hegemon of the Mediterranean" (*Wall Street Journal*). Hailed by critics as animating "the grand sweep and the intimate details that bring the distant past vividly to life" (*Economist*) in a way that makes "your hair stand on end" (*Christian Science Monitor*) and spanning nearly a thousand years of history, this "highly informative, highly readable" (*Dallas Morning News*) work examines not just how we think of ancient Rome but challenges the comfortable historical perspectives that have existed for centuries. With its nuanced attention to class, democratic struggles, and the lives of entire groups of people omitted from the historical narrative for centuries, *SPQR* will to shape our view of Roman history for decades to come.

100 illustrations; 16 pages of color; 5 maps

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“Beard tells this story precisely and clearly, with passion and without technical jargon...*SPQR* is a grim success story, but one told with wonderful flair.” (Greg Woolf - Wall Street Journal)

“Though she here claims that 50 years of training and study have led up to *SPQR*, Beard wears her learning lightly. As she takes us through the brothels, bars, and back alleys where the *populus Romanus* left their imprint, one senses, above all, that she is having fun.” (James Romm - New Republic)

“By the time Beard has finished, she has explored not only archaic, republican, and imperial Rome, but the eastern and western provinces over which it eventually won control...She moves with ease and mastery though archaeology, numismatics, and philology, as well as a mass of written documents on stone and papyrus.” (G. W. Bowersock - New York Review of Books)

“In *SPQR*, her wonderful concise history, Mary Beard unpacks the secrets of the city's success with a crisp and merciless clarity that I have not seen equaled anywhere else.” (Ferdinand Mount - New York Times Book Review)

“Beard does precisely what few popularizers dare to try and plenty of dons can't pull off: She conveys the thrill of puzzling over texts and events that are bound to be ambiguous, and she complicates received wisdom in the process. Her magisterial new history of Rome, *SPQR*...is no exception.... The ancient Romans, Beard shows, are relevant to people many centuries later who struggle with questions of power, citizenship, empire, and identity.” (Emily Wilson - The Atlantic)

“A masterful new chronicle.... Beard is a sure-footed guide through arcane material that, in other hands, would grow tedious. Sifting myth from fact in dealing with the early history of the city, she enlivens and deepens scholarly debates by demonstrating how the Romans themselves shaped their legendary beginnings to short-term political ends.... Exemplary popular history, engaging but never dumbed down, providing both the grand sweep and the intimate details that bring the distant past vividly to life.” (The Economist)

### About the Author

A professor of classics at Cambridge University, Mary Beard is the author of the best-selling *The Fires of Vesuvius* and the National Book Critics Circle Award–nominated *Confronting the Classics*. A popular blogger and television personality, Beard gave the Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and is a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. She lives in England.

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