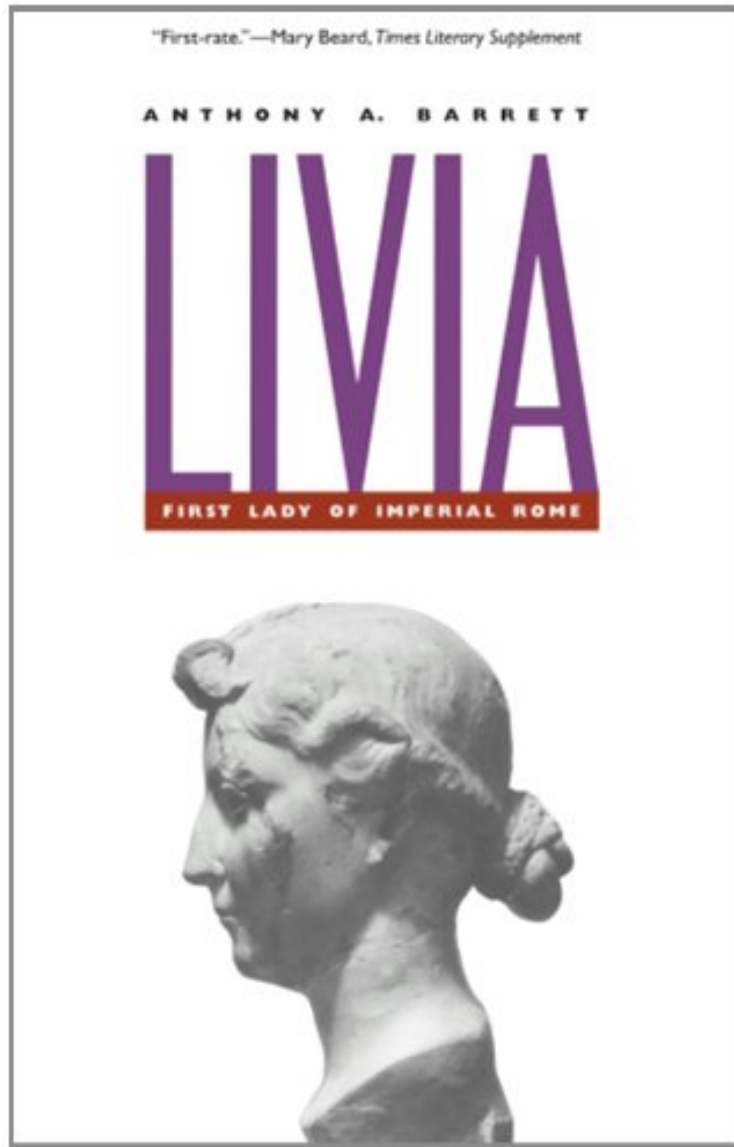


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Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome

Anthony A. Barrett

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#1715726 in Books Anthony A Barrett 2004-01-11 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.16 x 6.001, 1.31 #File Name: 0300102984464 pages Livia First Lady of Imperial Rome | File size: 34.Mb

Anthony A. Barrett : Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Exhaustive research By mitty I've wavered between a two and three star rating for Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome by Anthony A. Barrett. Finally, on account of his exhaustive research I've come down on a three star rating. Apparently there is not much in the way of hard evidence as to Livia's

personality or actions. Barrett makes it very clear that historians Tacitus', Seneca and Suetonius et als are torn, and conflicting in their portrayal of Livia. The former being the most acid and hostile to Livia. Barrett begins his biography by devoting paragraphs to speaking of Robert Graves' portrayal of Livia in *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*, including the BBC filming of same. He states (correctly) that Sian Phillips's portrayal of Livia was so strong, it has taken over popular opinion as the "real" Livia. There is a great deal of truth in what he says. However as far as I am concerned, Barrett has done very little to counteract that picture. He states time after time (ad nauseam) that there is no verifiable proof of Livia being a poisoner as stated in Graves books. Every step of the way though, Barrett backs up the verifiable events as seen in Graves work. There is nothing to counteract those assumptions of being a poisoner. And, I hasten to admit, as far as I can tell, they are assumptions. We have no forensic proof that Livia poisoned the ones she was accused of poisoning in Graves books. As Barrett presents her Livia did in fact, have motive and opportunity to commit those crimes that she has been accused of. Livia is presented by Barrett as being the epitome of Roman Womanhood, an example to be followed in every way. Loyal, and doing everything possible to support her husband. Let us also remember that Octavian/Augustus ran roughshod over many to become Emperor, and was politically savvy and an opportunist. From the Preface: "One of the burdens shouldered by the modern historian is that of correcting false impressions created by the popular media, particularly dangerous when a production is distinguished and the performances brilliant. This process usually involves the thankless task of demonstrating pedantically that, contrary to popular belief, truth is rarely stranger than fiction, and is usually far less exciting." Barrett seems to have shot himself in the foot in my view, as he doesn't prove anything, and is far too repetitive, and far too (his word) pedantic. In fact, as far as I am concerned, methinks the historian doth protest too much. 17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Livia has left the building By Carl Reddick LIVIA (First Lady of Imperial Rome) was just that. She was Augustus' wife and the mother of Tiberius and the grandmother of Caligula, Claudus, and Nero. As the first 'first lady' of the Imperial age she set the tone and pace of what would become the de-facto wife-of-an emperor (Augustus). No one had ever been in this position before. History has painted her as a murdering poisoner but author Anthony Barrett sets the gossip aside and plows right through the original sources teaching us why Tacitus and other primary sources were prejudiced against her and have handed down a tainted picture of her situation. Make no mistake, this was a hard book to read. It is real history by a real historian. But the effort really pays off if you are interested how Augustus and his wife virtually invented the politics that came to run the machinery started by Julius Caesar prior to his slaughter in the Senate House. I give it all 5 stars but caution that you should look elsewhere if you are just starting your adventure in reading about the glory that was Rome. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile Purchase. By William J. Hubeny I have always been interested in the day to day occurrences of ancient history, especially Rome, that never get into the general history books. There was plenty of that type of information in this book. The book was well written and relatively easy to read. My only complaint was that I tended to get lost in the multitude of "multi-worded" Roman personal names. And, many times I had to go back and reread who a certain character was. This was not the authors fault but it did tend to slow reading down. I recommend this book. It's a good read.

Livia wife of the first Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, and mother of the second, Tiberius wielded extraordinary power at the center of Roman politics. In this biography of Livia, the first in English, Anthony Barrett sets aside the portrait of a cunning and sinister schemer to reveal Livia as a complex figure whose enduring political influence helped shape Roman government long after her death. "An excellent biography of Livia-as appealing to the general reader as it is satisfying to the scholar." Colin M. Wells, Trinity University, San Antonio "In reading Anthony Barretts biography of Livia, I not only learned about this remarkable woman, but also gained a meaningful appreciation of life and society in her time." Howard Alper, President, The Royal Society of Canada "First-rate." Mary Beard, Times Literary Supplement

From Library Journal Barrett, who has written biographies of Caligula and Agrippina, here reconstructs the life of a noteworthy Roman historical figure about whom little direct information is available. Livia maintained a "deliberate reserve" throughout her life and was steadfastly committed to being the Emperor Augustus's wife. Much has been suggested about the influence she had on her husband during his tenure, and common belief holds that she deliberately poisoned his successors. Barrett counters the mostly negative attacks on her character, arguing that much of what has been said about her is spurious. As such, those responsible for documenting the imperial family, such as the historian Tacitus, get scrutinized. Barrett explores other facets of Livia's personality, such as her interest in horticulture and political patronage. The book presents the general politics of the time and highlights other key figures from imperial Rome. Surprisingly, Livia was highly regarded by the Roman Senate, as well as by other peers, who often commended her for her generosity. Barrett's work is probably denser and more detailed than would interest the average reader, but for those keenly interested in studying ancient Rome it comes as a welcome addition to the genre. Recommended for academic libraries. Isabel Coates, CCRA-Toronto West Tax Office, Mississauga, Ont. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. "In reading Anthony Barrett's biography of Livia, I not only learned about this remarkable

woman, but also gained a meaningful appreciation of life and society in her time."From the Back Cover"An excellent biography of Livia-as appealing to the general reader as it is satisfying to the scholar."-Colin M. Wells, Trinity University, San Antonio; "In reading Anthony Barrett's biography of Livia, I not only learned about this remarkable woman, but also gained a meaningful appreciation of life and society in her time."-Howard Alper, President, The Royal Society of Canada ; "First-rate."-Mary Beard, Times Literary Supplement