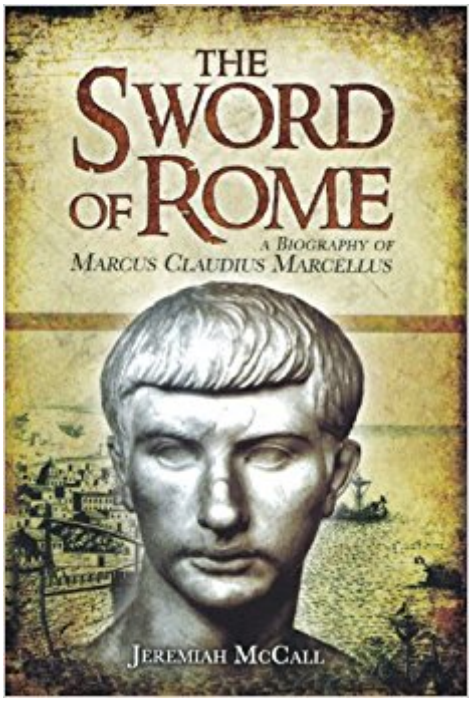
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The Sword Of Rome: A Biography Of Marcus Claudius Marcellus



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Synopsis

MarcellusÃ¢â ¬â„¢ military exploits were largely unmatched by any other aristocrat of Roman Middle Republic. As a young soldier in the First Punic War, he won a reputation for his skill in single combat. In his first consulship, he earned a triumph for defeating a Gallic tribe, no small feat in and of itself, and also slew the Gallic chieftain Britomartus in single combat. Consequently, he earned the spolia opima, an honor, according to Roman antiquarians, which had only been earned twice before, once by Romulus himself. He went on to defeat the hitherto-invincible Hannibal in a small battle around the central Italian city of Nola, and subsequently led an army to subdue and plunder the powerful city of Syracuse in an epic 2 year siege (despite the ingenious defensive measures of the inventor Archimedes). Yet, despite his undeniable success as a warrior and commander, Marcellus met with considerable political opposition at Rome. MarcellusÃ¢â ¬â„¢ career not only makes exciting reading, but gives an excellent vantage point from which to view the military and political struggles of the period and the role of military successes in the aristocratic culture of the Roman Republic. His biography will be an important addition to existing works on Roman military history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Valuable contribution to the literature on Roman generalship and on military leadership. (NYMAS Review)

Jeremiah B McCall is a school teacher in Cincinatti, Ohio. He is a pioneering advocate of the use of

video games as teaching aids and has a PhD in Classical History. He is the author of The Cavalry of the Roman Republic (Routledge, 2002) and an academic work on the educational use of computer games.

Given the dearth of information in the historical record about this very important man, particularly about his early life, Dr. McCall has pulled together a remarkably believable picture of him.It's made even more interesting by his ability to offer very plausible explanations that connect the dots in the often fragmentary record.

This is a book that should be on the preferred reading list of any student of Roman history. The narrative offers clarity and context to the to the events of the late third century Roman Republic, enabling the reader to understand how the Roman Republic, despite all of its shortcomings born of cupidity and the relentless pursuit of personal honor, could endure in the face of its greatest nemesis - Hannibal. Particularly noteworthy is Mr. McCall's critical analysis of events as related by the classical authors Polybius, Livy and Plutarch (to name just a few) to determine where the sources differ, where they converge, and what the likely outcome was. Against the backdrop of Marcellus' accomplishments the author gives a good accounting of the Roman military and political institutions of the day. I found his description of the military's maniple line of battle particulary informative. I would have enjoyed knowing more about Rome's system of alliances with the other Italian cities and the longstanding threat posed by the Gauls. Hopefully, Mr. McCall has another work in progress on these topics.

Although a small book in length it is well written taking in consideration the limited information available about Marcus Claudius Marcellus.

This is the first biography about Marcellus that I have seen. It covers the life of an extraordinary Roman statesman and general during a critical and popular period of Roman history, the 2nd Punic War. The author's writing style is easy to read and follow. Like most characters from the ancient past the author has to piece Marcellus' life together from various sources. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Roman history and the Roman Republic from both a political and military perspective.

Marcus Claudius Marcellus was probably the second most important man in the Second Punic War

against Hannibal. In fact aside from Scipio Africanus he was the only other Roman general to defeat Hannibal in open battle. The biography is fact filled but it is both an easy read and very informative. I have always wondered when a good biography on Marcus Claudius Marcellus would come out and this is it and yes I highly recommend this book.

Given the lack of hard historical records on Marcellus aside from legend and event chronicles, the author did a good job recreating the events of a key person in the history of Rome at the time of the Punic Wars.

I could have used more detail, particularly from more than Livy or Polybius.

Lots of background material on a poorly understood era in Roman history. McCall try's to explain Marcellus in light of how ancient historians saw him and then adds his own interpretation of what actually happens and how Marcellus thought and acted. Very well researched and written. The Middle Republic is an interesting era in Roman history.

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