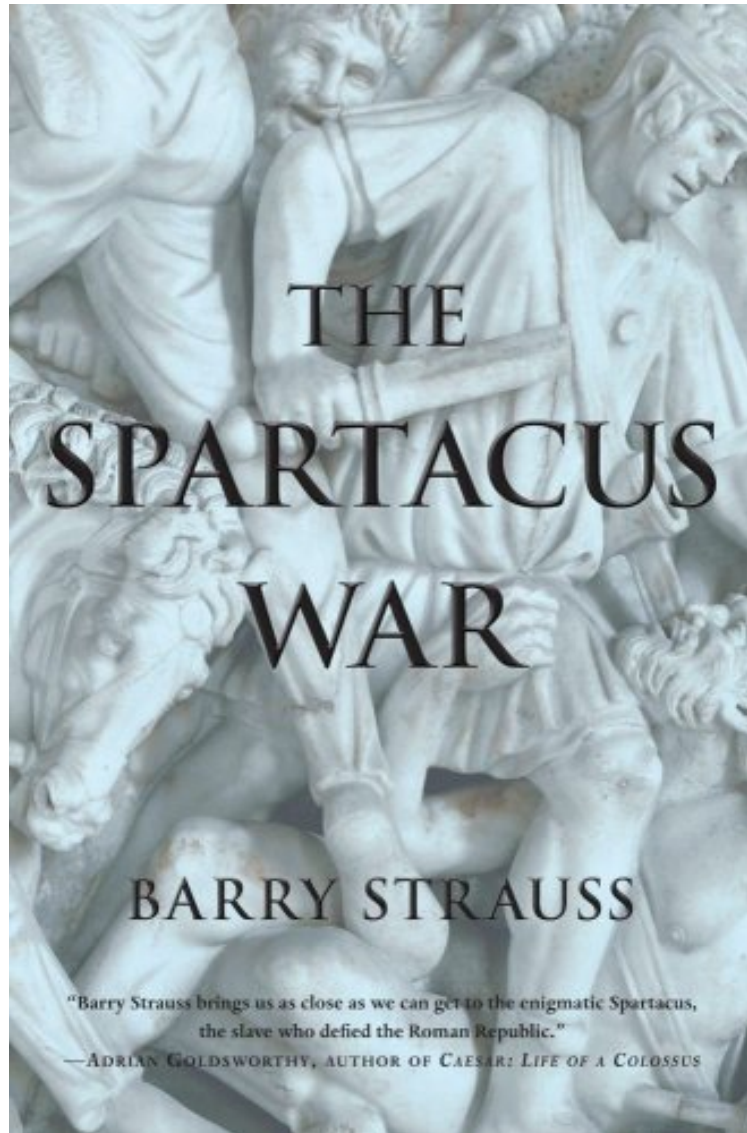


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The Spartacus War

Barry Strauss

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Barry Strauss : The Spartacus War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Spartacus War:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Spartacus: A Man for All Seasons.By Paul HosseOk, to be completely honest---I absolutely love this book. I've already read it three times through and I have no doubt I'll keep reading it over again and again, and what's not to love about it? Whenever one mentions the name "Spartacus", the image of gladiators comes instantly to mind and usually a close second is the terrific Kirk Douglas movie (admit it---

you just said to yourself "I am Spartacus!" didn't you?) or more recently, the outstanding Starz TV series by the same name. While the name and person of Spartacus has come down to us linked with the concepts of freedom and justice, just how accurate is that image? Dr. Barry Strauss takes us to a time and place long ago; one that may even seem vaguely familiar to us but strangely alien at the same time. It was a world of drastic dichotomies between the rich and poor; between the powerful and the weak; and between the free and the slave. Roman, though still a Republic much like ours, was nearing its end; soon to be faced with a series of internal civil wars resulting from an economic, political, and societal breakdown, and in its place, the Rise of the Dictator along with Imperial Rome. Slaves revolts weren't unique, but none had the organization, planning that this one had. None were able to raise an army of over 60,000 slaves and freemen, and none had the brilliance of a charismatic leader like Spartacus. Dr. Strauss' telling of the story is masterful, from the wonderful descriptions of the countryside to the mindset of the Rome's leading Senators and generals and that of the man himself, Spartacus and his generals like Crixus, Gannicus, or Oenomaus. We learn about the possible causes of the revolt; how they trained and survived while being chased by Rome's mighty legions and ultimately defeated by the epitome of Rome herself, Marcus Licinius Crassus and the great Pompey. I could literally go on and on about this book. Suffice it to say that this book is for anyone interested in history---ancient or military, the Roman Empire, political movements, slavery and ancient economies, or just likes a great adventure book. This book also offers something more. It offers a possible glimpse at ourselves. The Roman Republic was on the verge of collapsing for some of the very reasons now facing us, and social injustice was growing rapidly. What happens when the dispossessed has had enough? In 1919 Germany for instance, social democrats embraced the name of Spartacus in their fight for democracy; a fight which failed and eventually made way for the rise of the Nazis. Nevertheless, the name of Spartacus continues to inflame the imagination of the poor and powerless and inspires fear in rich and powerful.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Spartacus By MattThe book is entertaining and informative. It crams as much info as is available regarding the subject in. The topography and possible thoughts of Spartacus as a general also are explored. Gladiators, slaves, the Roman army...all are explored to some extent. The only reason I am giving it four stars is not because of the book or the author, but simply because of the subject matter. This is not a story of the Punic Wars, where Rome saw honor in fighting their enemy and hence documented well on it. Remember, history is written by the victors and the Romans ultimately here. To be honest though, seeing as it was a slave rebellion, asking the Romans to document the event is like asking someone to recall the story of a rape or murder: that is, they don't want to talk about it! The Romans saw the Third Servile War (the Spartacus War) as a time that they were repeatedly and utterly humiliated...time and time again. Finally, they won! But there is very little documentation regarding the war itself. So if one is looking for specific battles plans and such, we are only left with the author's speculation--well-grounded, logical, and descriptive, indeed, but still speculation. There are several times that a full-scale battle between the Romans and the rebels is summed up as basically "the two armies engaged at this location and all we know is that Spartacus was again victorious." It starts to get a little bit disappointing, but keep in mind that this demonstrates a historical lesson in and of itself! The Romans viewed a war with slaves as a embarrassing and unworthy of their time. The generals seeking glory, a triumph, a consulship, etc... viewed the war with Spartacus as one would view painting a wall--that is, "I really don't want to do this, but I guess someone has to..." Kudos to the author for writing a full book about a topic where the primary historians develop amnesia.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic Book By Obsidian A great book that provided all the detail that I thought existed and then some! Only gripe is a ridiculous one in that I wish there wasn't so much speculative speech like "one could gather" "imagine" "might have seen/thought/felt/etc" but that was obviously unavoidable when there is just so much detail that can only be guessed at. I became rather obsessed with Spartacus after watching through the series that aired on Starz. It was gory, sexual and exaggerated as well as largely fictional. However at the same time, the show did stick to quite a bit of history. From names of real people (albeit with alternative spellings on occasion). To fictional events that were set in the appropriate places (Capua, Vesuvius, Melia Ridge). It was an amazing show and instilled a great hunger for knowledge of the real man. Reading through the book, I couldn't help but picture the actors as the real people, like Liam McIntyre for the latter two seasons after the passing of Andy Whitfield. It was also pretty cool to imagine the real Spartacus maybe giving a speech similar to the one from the series finale in addition to the actual slaying of his horse prior to the real battle. The book also fills in bits of history that are related to the times, such as events that had happened nearby to the events of the Third Servile War, along with background of the various players throughout the war. I was also happily surprised to see the book not end after the description of the final battle and instead running a bit longer to discuss the aftermath of the war along with the eventual fates of those who were involved. (Spoiler alert, Caesar gets assassinated!! Lol). Mr. Strauss even took the extra time to mention this piece of art from Pompeii that may or may not be relevant to the legendary Thracian, which he certainly did not have to do. In summation, if you have even a passing interest in Spartacus, the Servile Wars or history during the Late Republic period, it's a good read. If you're like me and really want to know as much as you can about Spartacus, I recommend watching the show and reading the book, or vice versa. Maybe the show first since you could be bothered by the historical inaccuracies if you really absorb what the book offers. Read it!

An authoritative account from an expert author: *The Spartacus War* is the first popular history of the revolt in English. A leading authority on classical military history, Barry Strauss has used recent archaeological discoveries, ancient documents, and on-site investigations to create the most accurate and detailed account of the Spartacus rebellion ever written and it reads like a first-rate novel. A thrilling story that has inspired novelists and filmmakers: The real-life Spartacus is even more amazing than his fictional counterparts. A slave from Thrace (modern day Bulgaria), possibly of noble origins, he led a shocking rebellion at a gladiatorial school in Capua in 73 BC. Within two years the ranks of his army, which started with fewer than 100 men, swelled to 60,000; they routed nine Roman armies and for a time controlled all of southern Italy. The Roman general Crassus eventually defeated the slave army and while Spartacus apparently died on the field of battle, his body was never recovered. The legend arose that he escaped and remained undefeated.

From Publishers Weekly No one presents the military history of the ancient world with greater insight and panache than Strauss (*The Trojan War*). His latest work tells the story of a slave from the Balkans, a gladiator who in 73 B.C. led an uprising of 700 gladiators that eventually attracted over 60,000 followers. Strauss depicts Spartacus as a charismatic politician, able to hold together a widely disparate coalition of Celts, Thracians, Germans and Italians. As a general, he was a master of maneuver and mobility, keeping the ponderous Romans consistently off balance. Strauss reconstructs the rebels' movements across southern Italy and their development into an army good enough to overcome Rome's legions in battle after battle. Not until Marcus Licinius Crassus was given command of Roman forces did Spartacus face an opponent who could match him. Spartacus forced a battle that resulted in complete defeat and his anonymous death. But the uprising he sparked left a permanent mark on the Roman psyche and made Spartacus himself a figure of myth as well as history, as Strauss shows at the end of this brisk, engrossing account. 8 pages of b/w illus., maps. (Mar. 17) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The first-century BCE slave revolt against Rome was led by Spartacus, a Thracian-born gladiator who had previously served as a Roman auxiliary soldier. Spartacus and the struggle he led have served as the inspiration for movies, an opera, and several fictionalized accounts. He has also been adopted as a symbol of freedom by political movements of both the Left and Right. Yet the historical Spartacus remains a murky figure, while the details of the revolt remain subjects of historical dispute. Strauss, professor of history and classics at Cornell University, has made an admirable attempt to fill in some of the gaps in the historical record in a compelling but highly speculative effort. Strauss admits the lack of reliable primary sources has forced him to engage in some tricky conjectures regarding the character and motivation of Spartacus. Still, many of his assertions are credible, and his efforts to portray the political and social milieu of Italy during the late Republic are superbly done. Strauss sees Spartacus as a brave and charismatic leader who was limited by some personal shortcomings. --Jay Freeman "With his trademarks of extensive knowledge, insight, and great storytelling ability, Barry Strauss brings us as close as we can get to the enigmatic Spartacus, the slave who defied the Roman Republic." -- Adrian Goldsworthy, author of *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*