

contemporary shift toward historical authenticity in Cleopatra's portrayal.

Daugherty's exploration of various media forms offers students a deeper understanding of the cultural and economic factors that have influenced Cleopatra's representation. For students interested in Classics and Ancient History, this book serves as a bridge between ancient civilisations and modern interpretations. The first chapter, which examines the impact of Roman literature on Cleopatra's portrayal in Europe, provides important historical context. By tracing Cleopatra's reception throughout different periods, students can observe how societal norms, gender roles, and racial identities influenced her image over time. Daugherty skilfully navigates the historical and contemporary perspectives on Cleopatra, highlighting her enduring legacy.

Daugherty's meticulous research, extensive endnotes, and inclusion of visual materials, such as film stills and advertisements, offer students opportunities for further exploration and critical analysis. The endnotes provide references to additional sources on Cleopatra's presence in popular culture, allowing students to expand their understanding of the topic. The illustrations aid in exemplifying the transformations of Cleopatra's image and help students connect the text with tangible examples from various media forms.

Furthermore, the book's emphasis on Cleopatra's portrayal as a symbol of empowerment, sexuality, and racial ambiguity opens up discussions on broader themes such as gender, race, and identity. From this, students can engage in meaningful conversations about the representation of women in media, the influence of historical context on popular culture, and the perpetuation of myths and stereotypes. The language in the book is accessible and appropriate to those pupils in the senior phase of secondary school.

This volume serves as a valuable resource for high school students embarking on research, essays, or presentations. The detailed bibliographies at the end of the book provide guidance for further exploration into specific topics, enabling students to delve deeper into areas of personal interest. Its interdisciplinary approach, engaging writing style, and extensive references make it a useful tool for expanding knowledge and fostering critical thinking.

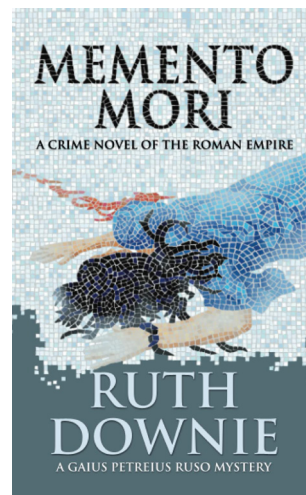
doi: 10.1017/S205863102300051X

## Memento Mori: A Crime Novel of the Roman Empire

Downie (R.) Pp. 473, Grampus Press, 2018. Paper, £11.99. ISBN: 978-1-9164694-7-1

Jodie Reynolds

Greenhead Sixth Form College, Huddersfield, UK  
JReynolds@greenhead.ac.uk



Author Ruth Downie has been penning her *Medicus* series of Roman crime novels for a number of years, and I am astonished that they have not come onto my radar before I was given the opportunity of reviewing *Memento Mori*, number eight in the series. These books feature former legionary doctor Gaius Petreius Ruso and his British wife Tilla. This book is a delightful romp through 2nd century Roman Britain, and I now fully intend to begin at the start of the series. This book could certainly be read as a stand alone novel, but I found the characters interesting and well

written, and would like to hear more about their stories.

Fans of Lindsey Davis' Falco series will undoubtedly enjoy this book. The main protagonist, Ruso, finds himself cast into a murder mystery when his best friend is accused of murdering his wife. What entails is Ruso and family having to decamp from an isolated spot in northern Britain to *Aquae Sulis* (modern-day Bath). Downie does a great job of creating a vivid and engaging picture of the historical city, and much of the action takes place at the bath house and Temple of *Sulis Minerva*; places that a modern reader may well have visited. The level of historical detail is ideal, in depth enough to grip the reader, clearly well researched, but not labouring the point; this is, after all, a crime novel rather than a piece of factual history. The storyline is compelling and well crafted, with interesting twists and turns in the plot. This is an ideal holiday read, with short chapters, which will keep you engaged long past bedtime as you will want to know what happens next.

The characters are likeable and amusing and I enjoyed seeing the story unfold from the viewpoints of the two main characters. Downie faces the eternal problem of writers of light-hearted Roman fiction; how to tackle the issue of slavery, which was obviously endemic. This is perhaps the only unsatisfactory element of the book, as the relationship between master and slave appears rather benign. However, the book is not seeking to advance any particular agenda and should be enjoyed for what it is, a well-written crime novel with a highly visual historical setting. There is plenty of action, a pacy story, engaging characters and a good sprinkling of humour. I enjoyed this book immensely.

doi: 10.1017/S205863102300034X