

The Twelve Caesars by Matthew Dennison.
Atlantic Books 2012.

One of the most significant books from the second century of the Roman Empire was Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum*, a text much loved by generations of schoolboys studying Latin for its salacious details about the Caesars in question: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, though such material was at its most extravagant in the lives of the Julio-Claudians rather than the Flavians.

Matthew Dennison's finely written *Twelve Caesars* is in parts as racy as its classic predecessor, and though it follows the same format it is written with the benefit of much historical research into the lives of these men and a distance in time from them that was obviously not available to Suetonius.

Anyone who has an interest in ancient Rome, and particularly in the life of one or more of its Emperors will find this an intensely satisfying read; those who wish to take their study further will also find a comprehensive bibliography as well as a very helpful glossary of terms.

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