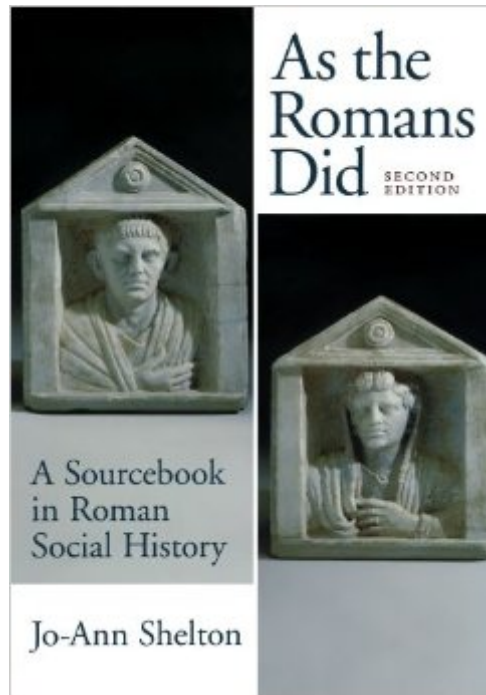


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# As The Romans Did: A Sourcebook In Roman Social History, 2nd Edition



## Synopsis

Revised to include new selections and updated bibliographical material, the second edition of this popular sourcebook offers a rich, revealing look at everyday Roman life. It provides clear, lively translations of a fascinating array of documents drawn from Latin and Greek source material--from personal letters, farming manuals, medical texts, and recipes to poetry, graffiti, and tombstone inscriptions. Each selection has been translated into readable, contemporary English. This edition includes more than 50 additional selections that introduce new topics and expand coverage of existing topics. In addition, the commentary on all the selections has been revised to reflect the recent scholarship of social and cultural historians. Extensive annotations, abundant biographical notes, maps, appendices, cross-references to related topics, and a newly-updated bibliography provide readers with the historical and cultural background material necessary to appreciate the selections. Arranged thematically into chapters on family life, housing, education, entertainment, religion, and other important topics, the translations reveal the ambitions and aspirations not only of the upper class, but of the average Roman citizen as well. They tell of the success and failure of Rome's grandiose imperialist policies and also of the pleasures and hardships of everyday life. Wide-ranging and lively, the second edition of *As the Romans Did* offers the most lucid account available of Roman life in all its diversity. Ideal for courses in Ancient Roman History, Social History of Rome, Roman Civilization, and Classics, it will also appeal to readers interested in ancient history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I must say this was an incredibly fun sourcebook to read. At times it had me laughing with humorous quotations such as; "I am amazed, o wall, that you have not collapsed and fallen, since you must bear the tedious stupidities of so many scrawlers" and at other times I would shudder; "Good God, what scrawny little slaves they were! Their skin was everywhere embroidered with purple welts from their many beatings. Their backs, scarred from floggings... their complexions were an ugly yellow..." Using a slew of both primary and secondary sources, Jo-Ann Shelton takes us through the life of the Romans. Covering topics as varied as slavery, provincial administration, the family unit, the magistrates and occupations, we are brought directly into Roman life with all of its practices, norms, values and peculiarities. The key feature of this book is the focus on the common Roman and how they lived with a section devoted entirely to woman in Roman society, a much overlooked topic. From dinner parties to funeral clubs, all aspects of the common Romans life are discussed. In all a very worthwhile book to own and use as both a source of reference and entertainment!

An extraordinary book, it alternates concise, cogent discussions of every aspect of Roman life with equally concise, cogent and elegantly translated short selections from Roman sources that illuminate the topic, serving both as a window on the lives of the Romans and as a comprehensive introduction to the wealth of Roman literature and documents that have survived. I was always entertained and often surprised and moved by the insights the book offered into Roman attitudes about government, religion, family life, economic striving, military affairs, and much, much more. Ranging from the laments of dramatists about the short attention spans of their audiences to the complaints of neighbors about the noise of early morning classes for school children, the book is so comprehensive - and Rome has so pervasively influenced our lives today - that a selection even explains why for over two thousand years grooms have traditionally carried their brides across the threshold.

I had to read this book for one of my University courses on Roman history (the first half), and while the other books I was forced to go through were dry and rather boring, unless your mind was concentrating hard, this book managed to bring Roman history and life ALIVE. The footnotes given are an absolute gem - to me, they WERE the high point of the book. Shelton does a fantastic job of explaining what certain words, phrases, rituals or just ideas the Romans held in the past. As stated previously, the book isn't "dry", by this I mean there isn't an action by action replay of things that don't really illustrate the true life they lived. Instead, there are bits and pieces of writings from various Romans about their life - such as a Roman writing a letter to a friend to tell him why no one

attends his dinners anymore, (even with the lure of free food) because they can't stand to hear him recite his boring poetry before, during and after dinner! The humour in some of these pieces really made it all come alive. Excellent read.

This book truly makes the ancient Romans come alive. The passages Shelton includes were written by ancient Romans themselves, so it is as though they are able to speak to us and tell us of their everyday lives. In this book it becomes clear that they were really not so different from people today, having many of the same problems and concerns. Shelton also uses very helpful cross referencing, as well as a thorough appendix and index, which aid the reader in fully understanding the book, which is not a difficult read at all.

Although this book was required reading for a Roman History class I took, I found myself really enjoying the read. Shelton does a superb job in collecting sources to paint an engaging and colorful picture of Roman society. I've read a lot of books about Roman history (due to the sweetness of its action), but few make the Romans seem to come alive quite like this one. If you like Roman history like me, this would be an excellent choice for your collection.

reads like a novel, concentrates on everyday life rather than great historical events. Truly the most informative and pleasant book to read for anyone with a desire to learn more on ancient Roman life.

Excellent. You will actually have a good time reading this if it is required for a class. There are plenty of funny anecdotes throughout. Many of the examples of people interacting seem like they could be happening now. The great thing about this book is that more than half of the material is ancient sources. Letters about marriage, politics, superstition, it is all taught by example, which takes you into the history much more. Wonder what the people actually thought about gladiatorial combats? What happened when someone had to go travelling? If there's two sides to the story, both sides are presented in this book.

This book was required reading for a Roman Civilization class, but we only read a few selections from it as supplementary evidence for other things we were studying, but since graduation I've had the opportunity to read it cover-to-cover and am surprised to find what enjoyable reading the book is on its own. Basically the book is a collection of excerpts from primary sources. In addition to the selections from contemporary writers, the author also includes inscriptions from gravestones

and architectural monuments, graffiti, and personal correspondence of ordinary people. Some of the excerpts are funny, but a number of them are surprisingly moving and very disturbing, such as the letter from a soldier on the frontier to his pregnant wife at home. He writes that if she has a boy that she should keep it, but if it is a girl that she should expose it. The reader gets a really good idea of how the Romans thought and what their values were from their own words. The author has provided extensive footnotes, serviceable maps, and a comprehensive bibliography. This book, in tandem with Charles Borenâ€™s ROMAN SOCIETY, provides an excellent foundation for further studies in the culture of Ancient Rome. Highly recommended! Five Stars!

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