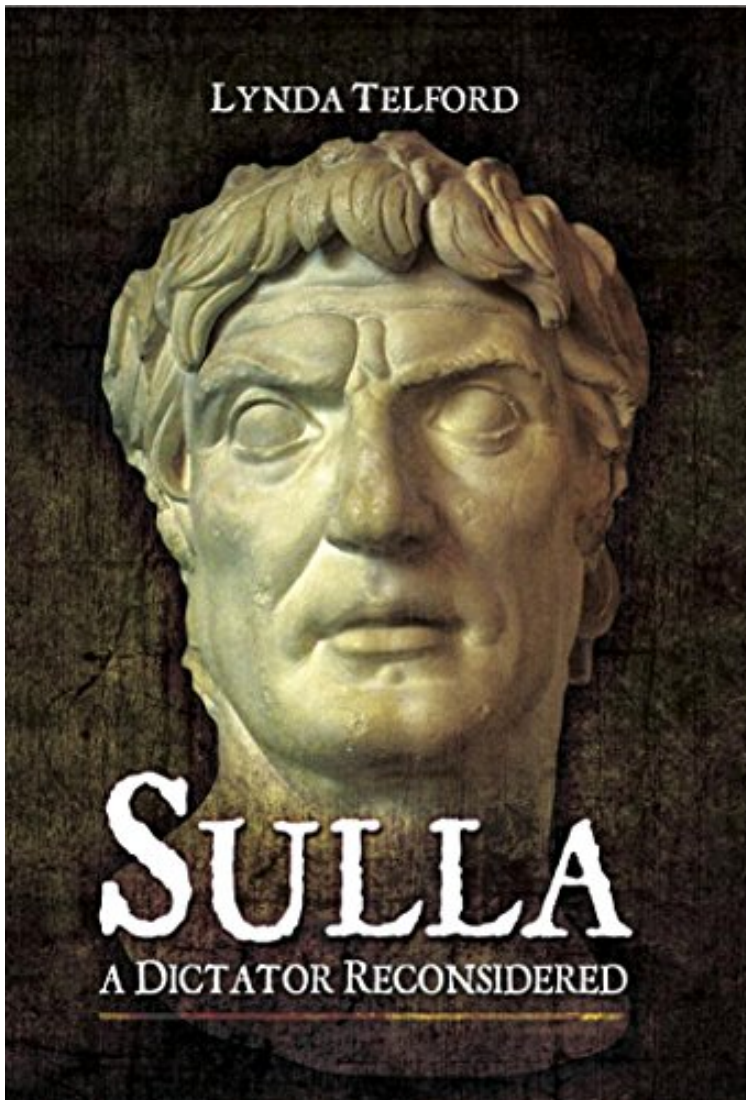


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Sulla: A Dictator Reconsidered



*Par Lynda Telford
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurLucius Cornelius Sulla is one of the central figures of the late Roman Republic. Indeed, he is often considered a major catalyst in the death of the republican system. the ambitious general whose feud with a rival (Marius) led to his marching on Rome with an army at his back, leading to civil war and the terrible internecine bloodletting of the proscriptions. In these things, and in his appropriation of the title of dictator with absolute power, he set a dangerous precedent to be followed by Julius Caesar a generation later. Lynda Telford believes Sulla's portrayal as a monstrous, brutal tyrant is unjustified. While accepting that he was responsible for much bloodshed, she contends that he was no more brutal than many of his contemporaries who have received a kinder press. Moreover, even his harshest measures were motivated not by selfish ambition but by genuine desire to do what he believed best for Rome. The author believes the bias of the surviving sources, and modern biographers, has exaggerated the ill-feeling towards Sulla in his

lifetime. After all, he voluntarily laid aside dictatorial power and enjoyed a peaceful retirement without fear of assassination. The contrast to Caesar is obvious. Lynda Telford gives a long overdue reappraisal of this significant personality, considering such factors as the effect of his disfiguring illness. The portrait that emerges is a subtle and nuanced one; her Sulla is very much a human, not a monster. Presentation de l'diteur Lucius Cornelius Sulla is one of the central figures of the late Roman Republic. Indeed, he is often considered a major catalyst in the death of the republican system. the ambitious general whose feud with a rival (Marius) led to his marching on Rome with an army at his back, leading to civil war and the terrible internecine bloodletting of the proscriptions. In these things, and in his appropriation of the title of dictator with absolute power, he set a dangerous precedent to be followed by Julius Caesar a generation later. Lynda Telford believes Sulla's portrayal as a monstrous, brutal tyrant is unjustified. While accepting that he was responsible for much bloodshed, she contends that he was no more brutal than many of his contemporaries who have received a kinder press. Moreover, even his harshest measures were motivated not by selfish ambition but by genuine desire to do what he believed best for Rome. The author believes the bias of the surviving sources, and modern biographers, has exaggerated the ill-feeling towards Sulla in his lifetime.

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