

Aurelius Symmachus: Exploring the Political Biography of a Remarkable Figure

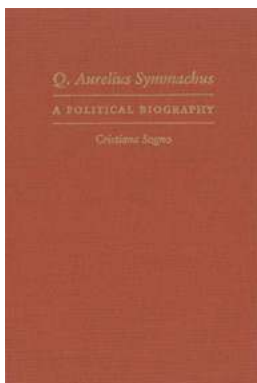
The Life and Times of Aurelius Symmachus

When it comes to the political history of Ancient Rome, few figures capture the imagination as much as Aurelius Symmachus. Born in 345 AD into one of the most influential senatorial families, Symmachus quickly rose through the ranks and became an important statesman during one of the Empire's most critical periods. His political career spanned over several decades, leaving an indelible mark on the political landscape of his time.

Early Years and Education

Symmachus grew up in a household deeply ingrained in Roman politics. His father, Quintus Aurelius, served as the Consul in 366 AD and was known for his charisma and eloquence. Inspired by his father's successes, young Aurelius received an exceptional education, excelling in rhetoric and philosophy.

His early exposure to politics laid the foundation for his career in public life. He embraced his family's legacy and was determined to make a meaningful impact on Roman society.



Q. Aurelius Symmachus: A Political Biography

by Cristiana Sogno (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 146 pages

Screen Reader : Supported



Rise to Power

Symmachus' political ascent began in 366 AD when he became a member of the Roman Senate. Gifted with oratory skills and a quick wit, he became known for his persuasive speeches on various political matters. His ability to sway opinions and forge alliances helped him gain favor among his peers and attract the attention of influential political figures.

His popularity continued to rise, and in 384 AD, Symmachus was appointed as the Consul, the highest political office in the Roman Republic. This achievement solidified his position as one of the most influential political figures of his time.

Political Stances and Controversies

During his time in office, Aurelius Symmachus held strong conservative views, advocating for the preservation of traditional Roman religious practices and a return to ancestral values. He firmly believed that Rome's greatness was rooted in its divine connections.

These views put him at odds with Emperor Theodosius I, who sought to establish Christianity as the official state religion. Symmachus fiercely opposed any measures that threatened the prominence of traditional Roman religions.

His most notable controversy occurred in 384 AD when he delivered the "Relatio" speech, pleading to the Emperor for the restoration of various religious altars in Rome. Although the speech was well-received by traditionalists, it ultimately failed to change the Emperor's stance.

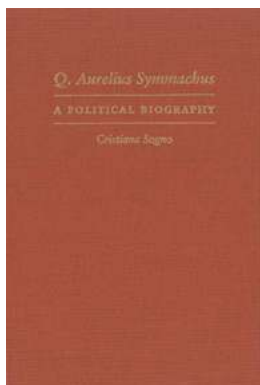
Legacy and Aftermath

Despite facing political setbacks and clashes with the Emperor, Aurelius Symmachus left an enduring legacy. His writings and speeches captured the essence of Roman conservatism, providing valuable insights into the political and religious landscape of his time.

Although largely forgotten during the Middle Ages, Symmachus' works were rediscovered during the Renaissance, provoking renewed interest in his political ideology. Today, scholars study his writings to gain a deeper understanding of the political dynamics of Ancient Rome.

In

Aurelius Symmachus was undoubtedly a fascinating figure in the landscape of ancient politics. His unwavering commitment to traditional Roman values and fierce defense of religious freedom set him apart from many of his contemporaries. Despite his political struggles, Aurelius Symmachus will always be remembered as a prominent statesman and an influential voice in Roman history.



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Symmachus was a brilliant orator, writer, and statesman, often flatly labeled as one of the last pagan senators. Cristiana Sogno offers a reconstruction of the political career of Symmachus through close analysis of his extensive writings, while also proposing a critical reevaluation of his historical importance. In contrast to traditional interpretation, Sogno's study demonstrates that Symmachus was primarily an influential politician, rather than a mere pagan zealot.

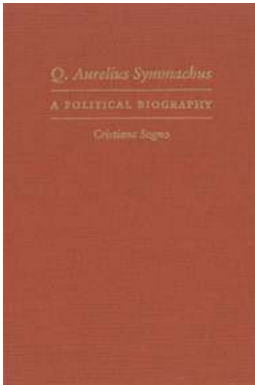
By portraying the individual experience of Symmachus, the book sets forth a new approach for interpreting the political aspirations, mentality, and attitudes of Roman senators. The much-studied question of the Christianization of the Western aristocracy has created the illusion of a Christian and a pagan aristocracy rigidly separated from each other. Through her study of Symmachus, Sogno demonstrates the primary importance of politics over religion in the public activity of the late Roman aristocracy. Although the book is specifically addressed to scholars and students of Late Antiquity, it will also be of interest to classicists, ancient historians, and non-specialists who wish to know more about this pivotal period in Roman history.

Cristiana Sogno received her Ph.D. in Classics and History from Yale University. Currently she is Townsend Assistant Professor of Classics at Cornell University. Visit Professor Sogno's website at: <http://www.fordham.edu>.



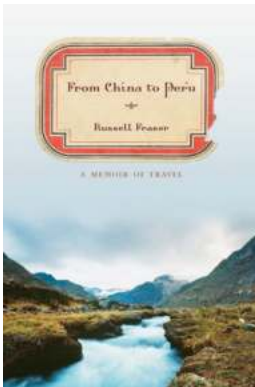
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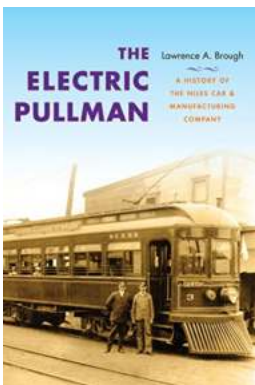
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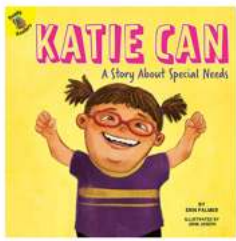
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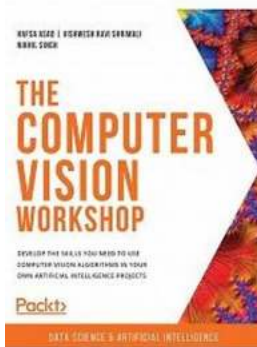
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