

Book Review: Roman Sex John Clarke (2003)

X-Rated but not shocking

With a large red X appropriately placed on its Dust Jacket, *Roman Sex* is a *tour de force* - elegant, beautiful, erudite, charming, graceful, sizzling, and accurate. I envy John Clarke's insights and taste. Oscar Wilde would have applauded *Roman Sex*. It has the sparkle and subtlety that Mary Beard's *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* lacks with her concentration on excavation of turds and skeletons. Both imply that ancient Romans first married when the girls were in their early teens. But about the authenticity of the Warren Cup they differ. The gay white gentleman is completely positive, while the determined 'Slayer of Trolls' equivocates about this most debated and expensive of recently accessioned and displayed of 'Roman' artifacts. Clarke titillates, Beard shocks and c'est la difference entre gout et degout.

By William A Percy