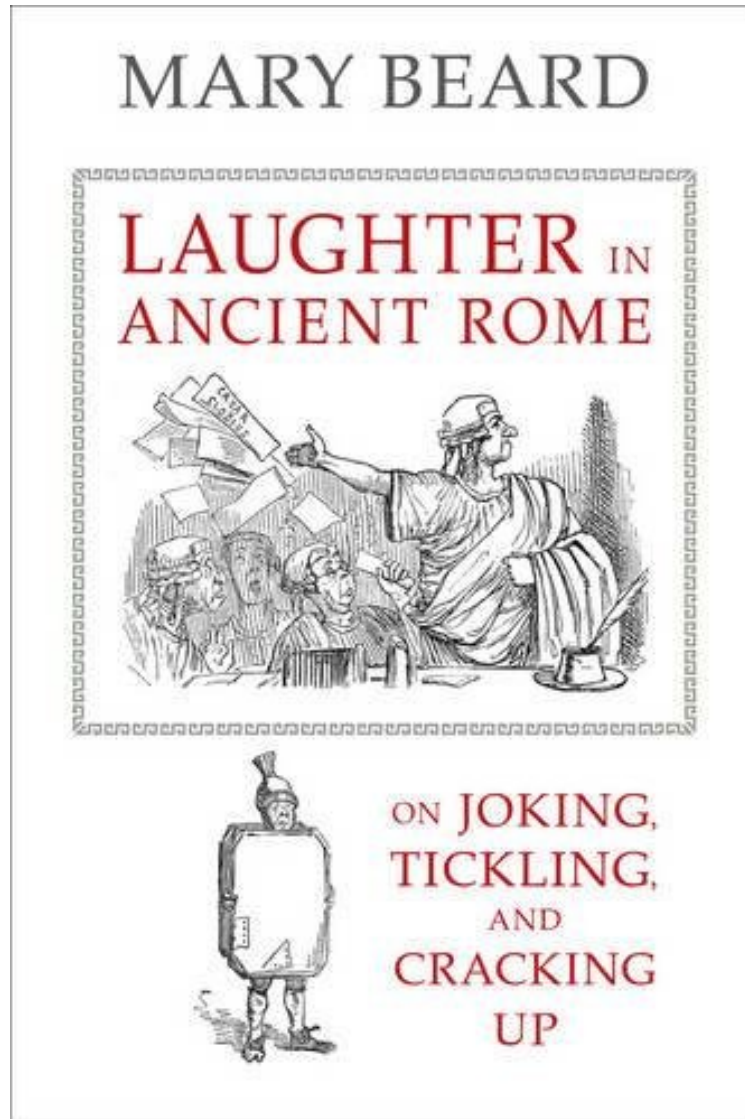


[Free] Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up (Sather Classical Lectures)

## Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up (Sather Classical Lectures)

Mary Beard

ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#413446 in Books 2015-09-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 0520287584336 pages | File size: 41.Mb

**Mary Beard : Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up (Sather Classical Lectures)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up (Sather Classical Lectures):

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A funny thing happened on my way.....By JGTNormally, dissecting what makes us laugh is as distant from humor as dissecting a human body is from cuddling. All the parts of

a joke can be labelled and parsed, or the nerves can be traced to their endings in the skin, but the result merely indicate a way to look at humor or affection, thus removing you to a point distant from the reality of either state. Normally. But in Mary Beard's book, *Laughter in Ancient Rome*, the dissection is done with such innate wit and verve that, while we may not slap our knees and guffaw while reading this beautifully written and impeccably researched essay, we are led gently, with affection, toward a greater understanding of what makes those ancestral jokesters our absolute kin.<sup>7</sup> of 7 people found the following review helpful. FIRST-RATE SCHOLARSHIP ELEGANTLY PRESENTED --A FASCINATING TOPIC By David Keymer In the fall of 2008, noted classicist Mary Beard gave the Sather (Classical) Lectures at Berkeley. Those lectures, and five years subsequent thinking over what she said there led to this book, and a fine piece of scholarship it is. Starting from the question, what made Romans laugh, she discusses a range of topics: what is laughter for? And what is humor –joking among its most prominent forms—for? Especially what role did joking play in status and power obsessed classical Rome? How transgressive and aggressive was Roman humor and laughter at different times during the imperiate? How much did Roman views on the role of laughter and of humor descend from Greek views and where was it different? In the brilliant penultimate chapter she meditates on an ancient compendium of jokes, the *Philogelos* (it contains “some 265 jokes”), and asks: did Rome invent the idea of the joke as an exchangeable commodity? (Almost every other aspect of Roman life was commodified.) Her observations on all these topics are carefully considered, weighed with ambiguity at times as is fitting on the study of texts so distant in time and mores from ours, and corrupted, even lost, in their transmission from scribe to scribe. Indeed, one of the most fascinating lessons of this rich study is how complicated it is to tease meaning from ancient artifacts and thus how provisional any conclusions reached from study must be. There are widely variant texts, missing parts, in some cases only fragments left or even less, just descriptions of the texts in other writers’ equally fragmentary works. Scribes have made grievous mistakes in transcribing, to the point that whole passages no longer make sense. Words are so badly written down as to be indecipherable. Beard cautions other scholars to move carefully in emending or filling in content in order to make obscure texts clearer: the risk of distortion is great. Some meaning we will just not uncover this far past when the texts were initially composed. This is a sage and very interesting book and for so specialized a topic and approach, one that will probably be read widely in scholarly circles. (It’s already been praised in the *London Times Literary Section* and in the *New York Review of Books*.) It requires careful attention while reading: the points she makes require detailed analysis of words and passages as well as sometimes extended discussion of other scholars’ interpretations. As to the secondary literature on her chosen subject, she seems to have read virtually everything, and her grasp of the primary sources is wide, catholic and inventive. She is generous in her judgment of her peers. (Because I had the opportunity to hear him speak a few years back and later to review a book by him, I noted especially her approving treatment of Simon Critchley’s work on laughter and joking.) 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Funny and interesting; ideal for anyone who likes Mary Beard's general style By Robert LI am a huge Mary Beard fan in general and I only bought this book because she wrote it. She also has a very distinct writing voice and style that I think people either love or hate; I happen to love her style but I couldn't recommend this book to everyone. If you do like her style, though, this book is amazingly critical and skeptical of traditional scholarship and casts really interesting doubt on conventional wisdom. She somehow managed to write a book about humor that, far from killing jokes by analyzing them, somehow manages to be really funny in and of itself in many places. It's great.

What made the Romans laugh? Was ancient Rome a carnival, filled with practical jokes and hearty chuckles? Or was it a carefully regulated culture in which the uncontrollable excess of laughter was a force to fear—a world of wit, irony, and knowing smiles? How did Romans make sense of laughter? What role did it play in the world of the law courts, the imperial palace, or the spectacles of the arena? *Laughter in Ancient Rome* explores one of the most intriguing, but also trickiest, of historical subjects. Drawing on a wide range of Roman writing—from essays on rhetoric to a surviving Roman joke book—Mary Beard tracks down the giggles, smirks, and guffaws of the ancient Romans themselves. From ancient “monkey business” to the role of a chuckle in a culture of tyranny, she explores Roman humor from the hilarious, to the momentous, to the surprising. But she also reflects on even bigger historical questions. What kind of history of laughter can we possibly tell? Can we ever really “get” the Romans’ jokes?

“*Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up*,’ which has just been published, is an engaging exploration of what made the Romans laugh—bad breath, among other things—but it also explores dimensions of Roman sensibility that have become elusive to us.”