



[Home](#) > [Why Are You Calling Me a Barbarian?](#)

Why Are You Calling Me a Barbarian?

Books Reviewed:

[Why Are You Calling Me a Barbarian?](#) [1]

Issue:

[122](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

2

This book offers contrasted accounts of children's lives in Imperial Rome and in Scandinavia in the 3rd century AD. The narrators are two children, one the daughter of a slave in the household of a Roman general; the other the son of a Scandinavian merchant. The text, originally in Italian and intended for 8-10 year olds, is written by two authors and lacks cohesion. It also lacks precision. This arises partly from trying to be true to the view of child narrators, whose knowledge would be limited, and partly from the cartoon illustrations, which do not suit a text that requires that differences in environment and social behaviour be shown clearly. The approach is anachronistically Pan-European: the point being that those whom the Romans regarded as barbarians had civilisations of their own. A good proposition, but an unconvincing way to present it. There is no index and a poor contents page, with inscrutable chapter headings like 'Mosquitoes at War', which makes the extraction of specific information impossible.

Running Order:

60

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[1] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/why-are-you-calling-me-a-barbarian>

[2] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/122>

[3] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>