

BOOKLIST

Pastor is one of several historical-mystery writers (Steven Saylor and Lindsay Davis are the most prominent) who mine the rich vein of material from ancient Rome. There were no PIs walking the mean streets of Rome in those days, so Pastor and the others must find a kind of *I, Claudius* narrator with access to high and low society. Pastor uses Diocletian's official historian, Aelius Spartianus, who records happenings throughout Rome's far-flung provinces for the emperor and his coemperor, Maximian.

Aelius is shaken by the news that someone known as the Fire Waker has revived a man from death. This miracle could spell trouble for Diocletian's campaign to suppress Christianity. Matters are further complicated when Aelius finds that the so-called resurrected man has been newly murdered.

There is a great deal of historical interest here, though Pastor could take a few more pains to set context for the general reader. There are few anachronisms, too, as in the doctor who sounds like a modern pathologist. Still, solid entertainment for ancient history–mystery buffs, especially those who know their ancient Rome.

Connie Fletcher