
The ‘Rome’ of the title refers to the physical city, not to a historical or cultural period. In fact the chronological range covered by the book extends from the eighth century BC to the seventeenth century AD. It is superbly illustrated with multiple colour photographs on every page. The accompanying text provides a reliable and up-to-date account of the archaeological and artistic heritage of the city in clearly written prose packed with precise detail. Originally written in Italian by a team of contributors, the book has been very competently translated into English by Huw Evans, presumably with the US market uppermost in his mind since the spelling is American and all metric measurements are followed by conversions into feet. The four broad historical divisions into which the editor has divided the book follow conventional periodisation: Ancient Rome (fifty-four pages), Medieval Rome (forty-two pages), Renaissance Rome (fifty-four pages), and Baroque Rome (forty-eight pages). Such an impressive amount of information is packed into this text that it could be used as a reliable, if incomplete, introduction to ‘Roman’ art in any of these periods. Equally useful are the interspersed articles on special features, for instance, fountains, towers, bridges, the Appian Way, the Museums of Rome, or Michelangelo’s reorganisation of the Capitol. One of the most valuable of these is the short account of the post-1995 excavations in the imperial fora (49). At the end of the book is an illustrated survey of the holdings of the main art galleries (210-23) and a
one page bibliography. There is no index, but the format of the book, with its many subheadings, makes such a feature unnecessary.

Those who purchase the book will certainly get their money's worth in the illustrations alone. Whether the book would serve the purpose as a study text will depend greatly on the type of course and the teaching situation. Its greatest value is for those with time to spend on the ground in Rome who wish to explore the city's superimposed layers of cultural and architectural history. Thus it would be very suitable reading for groups on an extended study tour of the city. Included in the book are works of art located in Rome that are not Roman in the usual sense of the word (e.g. Greek and Etruscan holdings in the Vatican museum and the Villa Giulia). The one great limitation of the book is that it otherwise divorces Rome from the rest of the world, even from the rest of Italy, by interpreting the ‘Rome’ of the title in the narrowest sense, excluding from consideration even significant areas as close to Rome as Tivoli and Ostia. Few courses on ancient Roman art or archaeology would base themselves only on the evidence of Rome itself, without extensive reference also, for instance, to Pompeii or Herculaneum; similarly few courses on Renaissance Italian art could be focused on Rome to the general exclusion of Florence, Venice and other important cities. The one other type of reader for whom the book offers exceptional value is the student of urban development, since, as the book amply illustrates, the city of Rome is perhaps the best example in the world of a site continuously occupied and reconstructed over several millenia.

There is no original research here, but rather a well put-together survey of current knowledge compiled from standard secondary scholarship. The writing is expository rather than persuasive or argumentative, and can become a little dull on occasion (especially in the catalogues of artists' names and dates in the Renaissance and Baroque sections). The art history is orthodox, with little attention given to controversies of interpretation or conceptualisation. Monolingual English readers will find the bibliography somewhat baffling because most of the books cited are in Italian. For instance, of those books about ancient Rome that are listed, only one is in English.

Nevertheless, this book must be recommended for its sumptuous illustrations as well as its text, and even the text never pretends to be more
than it is, a reliable survey of the art and archaeology of the city designed not for use by professors of art history but for interested and intelligent visitors to the sites and museums.

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