



PEOPLE AND PLACES OF THE ROMAN PAST

THE EDUCATED TRAVELLER'S GUIDE

Edited by

PETER HATLIE



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Chapter One

THE EDUCATED TRAVELLER'S GUIDE

PETER HATLIE

THE CITY OF Rome has an infinite number of stories to tell—ancient, modern, and everything in between. Some of these are an invitation to the city's beauty and pleasures. Others are lessons or teaching-moments emerging, like searching spirits, from Rome's eventful and densely-layered past. Still others bring us face to face, sometimes intimately and often poignantly, with the peaks and valleys of Rome's three thousand years of lived existence, its epic tragedies and triumphs, along with its deeply-felt wounds and its liberating heights of joy.

As one of the world's oldest and most beautiful cities, Rome is admired by travellers the world around. And on certain days—and in particular on certain moments of certain days—Rome is perhaps even more beautiful than descriptions will allow. It can be a feast for the eyes and a banquet for all the other senses, too. As travellers for centuries have found, there are ever so many particular attractions to recommend Rome. Take, for example, one of the city's many world-class museums. Or maybe it's a lonely alleyway or neighbourhood that will seduce you with its charm and local history. Maybe again it is the sight of Rome's seemingly eternal and all-seeing Tiber River—a god of a river after all!—from one of its elegant and strategically placed bridges. Never mind the place or moment of your surrender to the embrace of Rome. Just let it happen.

In reality, the question is not whether to surrender but rather how and where to begin. For its part, this book pays due respect to the sensory beauty and immense historical interest of Rome while also setting out to explain and elaborate upon the city's creative forces. Written by college professors who have lived in Rome and specialize in Roman history, religion, and culture, the book introduces readers to the eternal city by turning attention to some of the most interesting people who have contributed to its history and culture. Each chapter is dedicated to a significant historical figure whose life in Rome has left a lasting footprint, be it a monument, a great work of art, or a tangible memory of great ideas and remarkable things accomplished. Men and women are included in the list of biographical subjects, as are important people from all walks of life—artists, writers, politicians, churchmen, and pilgrims. The book takes us as far back as the city's mythical origins with Romulus and Remus and as far forward as the turn of the nineteenth century. Not accidentally, focusing in on the lives of some of its most prominent citizens and visitors throughout the ages takes us also to some of the most interesting neighbourhoods and tourist sites of Rome.

This book is a cross between a tourist guide, scholarly endeavour, and encyclopedia. It is written for travellers in search of inspiration and information as they tour the streets, churches, museums, and monuments of the Roman past. Ambitiously, it takes the reader to practically every notable neighbourhood within Rome's ancient walls and many beyond those walls, including Vatican City. It is ambitious, too, in familiarizing readers with virtually every historical epoch in Rome's long and continuous history from ancient through modern times.