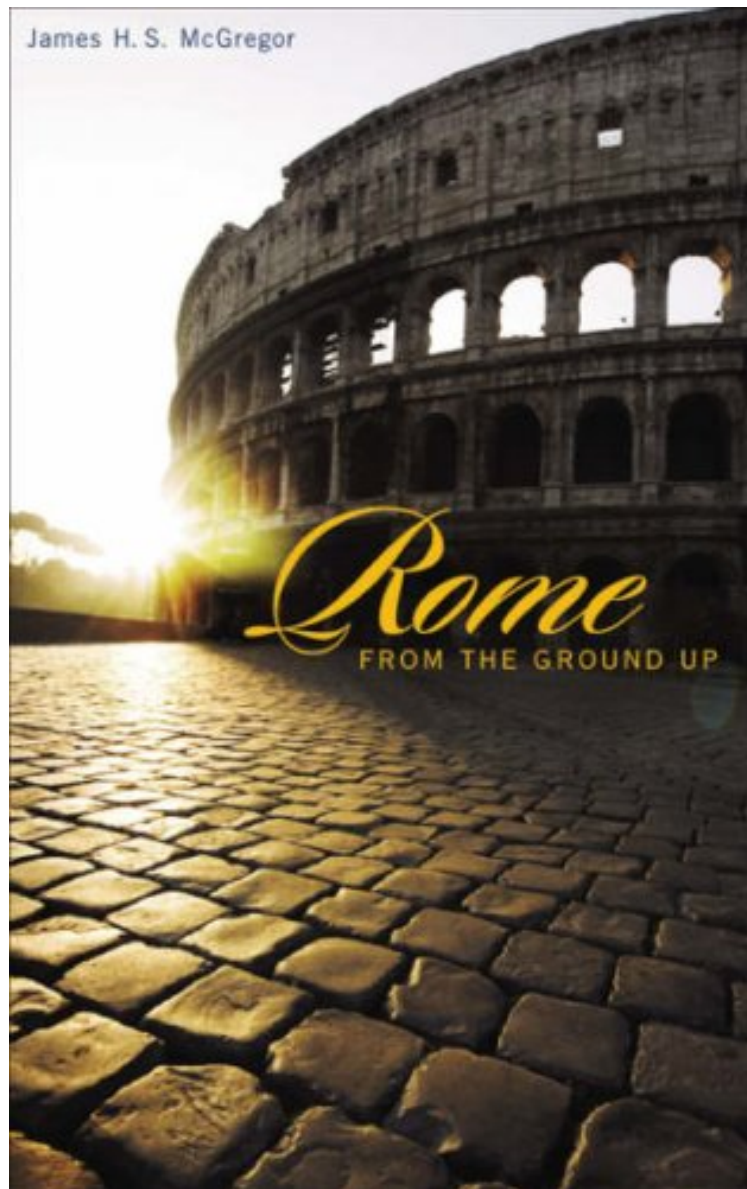


(Library ebook) Rome from the Ground Up

## Rome from the Ground Up

*James H. S. McGregor*

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**James H. S. McGregor : Rome from the Ground Up** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rome from the Ground Up:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. wowBy Jennifer S. HallThe easiest best book to read about Rome and history. He takes you through the start, so the places he talks about may not be physically located together... which is great because you get a breather, but they are all around the same time period. It ended up being my main

book for Rome site-seeing. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good for reading before or after a walk, but not during. By ronnie. Of the several guidebooks I have walked around Rome with on several visits, this is the most insightful. The locations, buildings, objets d'art on which the author chooses to comment are placed in the context of historical forces -- political, social, and economic. I came away with a much better understanding of the significance of what I saw than ever before in Rome. However, there are several drawbacks. First, it is sometimes difficult to follow the text while walking. The text is keyed to the occasional picture, but not to the maps at the end of the book, so you may frequently not know just where you are and where you are to go next. Second, some of the walks are ordered in a sensible sequence; some make no sense at all, jumping back and forth over kilometer-long gaps. Third, the book tells you nothing about places you pass as you proceed from one location the author chose to the next. Finally, the book is printed on a glossy paper which makes it rather heavy, and somewhat unpleasant to carry. My recommendation: Read this book in your hotel room, before or after your walk, but walk with a different guidebook. (My favorite for walking in Rome is still the Michelin Green Guide.) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By Albert Siriano. ok

Rome is not one city but many, each with its own history unfolding from a different center: now the trading port on the Tiber; now the Forum of antiquity; the Palatine of imperial power; the Lateran Church of Christian ascendancy; the Vatican; the Quirinal palace. Beginning with the very shaping of the ground on which Rome first rose, this book conjures all these cities, past and present, conducting the reader through time and space to the complex and shifting realities--architectural, historical, political, and social--that constitute Rome. A multifaceted historical portrait, this richly illustrated work is as gritty as it is gorgeous, immersing readers in the practical world of each period. James McGregor's explorations afford the pleasures of a novel thick with characters and plot twists: amid the life struggles, hopes, and failures of countless generations, we see how things truly worked, then and now; we learn about the materials of which Rome was built; of the Tiber and its bridges; of roads, aqueducts, and sewers; and, always, of power, especially the power to shape the city and imprint it with a particular personality--like that of Nero or Trajan or Pope Sixtus V--or a particular institution. McGregor traces the successive urban forms that rulers have imposed, from emperors and popes to national governments including Mussolini's. And, in archaeologists' and museums' presentation of Rome's past, he shows that the documenting of history itself is fraught with power and politics. In McGregor's own beautifully written account, the power and politics emerge clearly, manifest in the distinctive styles and structures, practical concerns and aesthetic interests that constitute the myriad Romes of our day and days past.

From Publishers Weekly. This intricate, literary traveler's guide explores the contiguous cities of Rome built on the Tiber floodplain over the centuries. McGregor, co-head of the University of Georgia's department of comparative literature, chronologically traces the successive periods of intense architecture and planning that helped Rome achieve strategic greatness, from the Etruscan management of the Tiber Island ford 3,000 years ago, to the city's unparalleled artistic stamp by Bramante and Michelangelo during the Renaissance, to Mussolini's monumental Fascist vision, to the precarious repairs heralding the Jubilee Year of 2000. The ancient historian Strabo remarked that while Greek cities were esteemed for their beauty and wealth, Rome excelled in the construction of roads, aqueducts and sewers, and on this theme McGregor dwells expertly, giving readers an excellent tour of ancient landmarks. As an official residence of emperors until the fourth-century displacement of the capital to Constantinople, Rome gushed with water in the form of baths and fountains; with the return of the popes from Avignon in 1377, the Vatican assumed prominence, and Bramante's restructuring of Old St. Peter's became a beacon for Rome's new mission. Here is a walking tour in stately, inviting prose that renders wonderfully manageable a massive history lesson for the intellectually curious and adept. Illus. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist. Where history, architecture, and travel find common ground is where this author dwells. Here he revisits the long and distinguished history of Rome. McGregor's educational and practical account, which underscores the unplanned nature of the Eternal City's evolution from a place to ford the Tiber River, focuses primarily on Rome as, first, home of the Roman emperor and, second, seat of the papacy (with final pages given over to Rome as capital of a united modern kingdom and the post-World War II republic). The narrative structure is what will attract tourists with a sense of the past: McGregor "presents history concretely through descriptions of monuments that still exist today," and he describes those monuments "in the order that readers would encounter them as they walked through the city." Peppered with crisp illustrations, this book is recommended for the erudite traveler. Brad Hooper. Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved. Rome from the Ground Up is an enthralling book. McGregor's sensitive, lively writing rises to the beauties of the city and, miraculously, does so with the same economy that characterizes Roman Baroque architecture. McGregor obviously sees Rome's most sublime realms and writes a sublime prose to match, as far away from Rococo ornament as it is from the Rome that is grubby, gruff, crowded, boorish and bureaucratic?and this is perfectly true to the city, for that remarkably pure vision that is the Rome of the imagination has always floated above the Rome of reality, certainly since the time of Cicero and Vergil, probably since Romulus emerged from his mud hut alongside the Forum stream. (Ingrid Rowland, author of From Heaven to

Arcadia)McGregor has produced a guide to Rome like no other known to me. An astonishing feat of exposition and compression, *Rome from the Ground Up* would be immensely useful for any intelligent visitor in Rome for the first time. (Anthony Grafton, author of *Bring out Your Dead*) This intricate, literary traveler's guide explores the contiguous cities of Rome built on the Tiber floodplain over the centuries. McGregor, co-head of the University of Georgia's department of comparative literature, chronologically traces the successive periods of intense architecture and planning that helped Rome achieve strategic greatness, from the Etruscan management of the Tiber Island ford 3,000 years ago, to the city's unparalleled artistic stamp by Bramante and Michelangelo during the Renaissance, to Mussolini's monumental Fascist vision, to the precarious repairs heralding the Jubilee Year of 2000. 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(Kirkus s 2005-08-15) Where history, architecture, and travel find common ground is where this author dwells... The text, peppered with crisp illustrations, is recommended for the erudite traveler. (Brad Hooper Booklist 2005-09-15) *Rome from the Ground Up* is splendid. It is an informative and intriguing introduction to the city, not only for those on their first visit but also for many who have been beguiled by the city but have wanted a guide to lead them step by step, illuminating buildings as they go, who may not need (nor want) the quantities of information supplied by a more thoroughgoing architectural guide. As such it fills a distinct need and has done it handsomely. I will certainly recommend it to our students-- and to anyone else heading to Rome. (Alexander Purves, Professor, Yale University School of Architecture) Despite the organized chaos of its streets and squares, Rome was not a planned city, but a group of cities that gradually became one. In *Rome From the Ground Up*, James H. S. McGregor describes how this happened in prose so clear you'll think it came from one of Rome's many springs. (John Freeman Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 2005-12-17) McGregor has written an informative architectural history of Rome, a cumulative portrait that can serve as a walking guide to the city as well. Some have described Rome as a palimpsest, a metaphor McGregor believes is of limited use. Rome was not a sequence of cities built on top of another, but a series of power centers that shifted location across the Tiber floodplain over some 2800 years. The author begins at Tiber Island, with its river ford, and at the river port that served this most ancient of Romes. After an excellent description of the structures in the area and the activities that took place around them, McGregor relates the changes that have occurred in the region over the centuries. This successful formula is applied through the end of the 20th century in chapters on the Roman forums, the imperial palaces, the early Christian churches, the Vatican, the Renaissance City, and the Baroque expansion of Rome. (Robert Andrews Library Journal 2006-02-01) This survey of Rome's past, as it evolved over 3,000 years from a string of small cities that sprung up along the Tiber into the seat of empire and finally today's city, is part history, part architecture, part travelogue... McGregor metaphorically digs into the soil beneath Rome's present-day monuments to 'reconnect the modern city with its ancient counterparts.' Each chapter considers the monuments in the order that a visitor would encounter them while walking through the city, resulting in a guide for the thoughtful traveler as well. Color photos, engravings, historical maps, architectural plans and drawings bring Rome's past to life. (Christine Delsol San Francisco Chronicle 2006-01-26) An important addition to the already jam-packed library of books on Rome... Unlike the standard Baedeker guide--which leads the reader through meticulously detailed tours of specific sites--McGregor takes on the whole magnificent sweep of Roman history, from Romulus to Rutelli (to quote my cicerone friend). In a novel approach, he tells the city's story by taking you on a neighborhood by neighborhood visit, starting with the oldest part, the Tiber Island and the Ancient Port, and then moving slowly away from the river and into the Forum, the Imperial City, the Vatican, Trastevere and the Quirinale hill... *Rome from the Ground Up* provides just the kind of overarching structure that the visitor to Rome needs, either on the way to or back from the Italian capital. It is also a beautifully-written work, providing a prose that is a very fitting tribute to the sights that it describes. So while the politicians are slugging it out in buildings with glorious names like Palazzo Madama and Montecitorio, why not take an excursion through history, in the comfort of your own armchair? (Michael Moore US Italia Weekly 2006-05-01) While no single book can ever do justice to such a city, McGregor's study provides an illuminating and practical introduction to Rome... For those lucky enough to find themselves in Rome for the first time, McGregor's integrated approach to the architecture, culture and history of the city would be a useful and reliable aid to understanding its manifold complexities. (Peter Keegan Bryn Mawr Classical 2006-05-28) I can't really have a favorite book on Rome, can I? No, but...well, this comes close. In three hundred pages of clean, muscular prose, McGregor has done the almost impossible task of pulling the glories of this city together in a neat, readable, incredibly well informed study. He takes us through the history of Rome as reflected through its physical presence, as he briskly describes with a

wonderful eye what we can still see around us, and how we can place these wonders into a coherent sense of the city. (Robert Barret SlowTravel)The author chronicles Rome's evolution over 3,000 years from a group of small cities along the Tiber River, showcasing the architecture, history and culture that made it what it is today. The lush images and maps are unusually rich for a paperback edition. Planning a trip to Rome this year? Be sure to slip this book into your valise. (Steve Goddard History Wire 2008-05-19)