



The Colosseum

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The Colosseum

The Colosseum

A place of grandeur and cruelty, the Colosseum has long excited the imagination of the West. As an example of architecture and public works, the Colosseum is one of imperial Rome's greatest achievements; as the site of gladiatorial battles and the humiliation of Rome's enemies, the magnificent arena reminds us of the worst excesses of the ancient world.

In this magisterial study, every aspect of the Colosseum is examined, including the demography of the city at the time of its construction; the origins, administration, and staging of gladiatorial contests; the architecture of its interior and exterior, as well as its underground chambers; the amazing feats of scenery management and hydraulic engineering that allowed it to function; and the history of the Colosseum from the time of its inauguration in A. D. 80 until today.

More than two hundred illustrations--including ancient coins, contemporary photographs, oil paintings and watercolor sketches, diagrams, maps of the ancient city, and aerial views--show not only every aspect of the building as it exists today but how it has been seen or imagined through the ages. Texts by scholars in the fields of art, architecture, and antiquities--prepared under the direction of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma--provide the clearest and most complete account ever published of one of the Western world's greatest monuments.

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