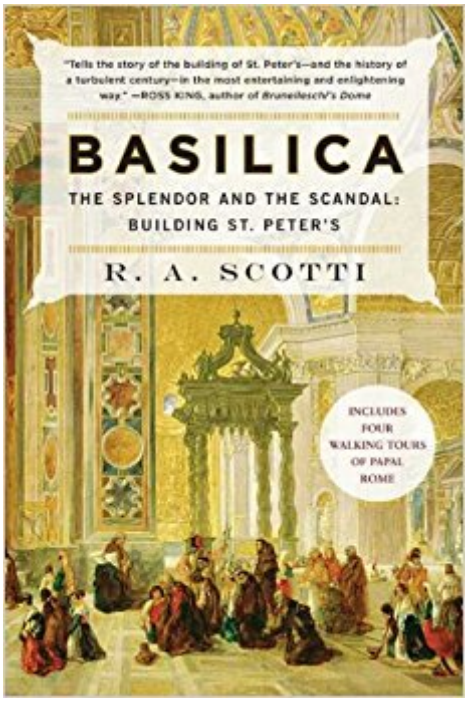
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Basilica: The Splendor And The Scandal: Building St. Peter's



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Synopsis

In this dramatic journey through religious and artistic history, R. A. Scotti traces the defining event of a glorious epoch: the building of St. Peter?s Basilica. Begun by the ferociously ambitious Pope Julius II in 1506, the endeavor would span two tumultuous centuries, challenge the greatest Renaissance masters?Michelangelo, Raphael, and Bramante?and enrage Martin Luther. By the time it was completed, Shakespeare had written all of his plays, the Mayflower had reached Plymouth?and Rome had risen with its astounding basilica to become Europe?s holy metropolis. A dazzling portrait of human achievement and excess, Basilica is a triumph of historical writing.

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Customer Reviews

In this absorbing story of the construction of the Basilica of St. Peter in RomeÃ¢â ¬â •the grandest architectural undertaking of the High RenaissanceÃ¢â ¬â •Scotti (Sudden Sea: The Great Hurricane of 1938) shows how the construction fed the ambitions of 30 popes, including the indomitable Julius II, who laid the first stone in 1506; Leo X, the Medici pope whose extravagant spending fueled the resentment toward the papacy that culminated in the Protestant Reformation; Clement VII, on whose watch Rome was sacked by Emperor Charles V; and Sixtus V, who restored the ravaged city and pushed, against all odds, to have the great dome completed during his lifetime. In 1506, the great architect Donato Bramante envisioned a gigantic central crossing topped by a dome of such daring design that many believed it could not be built. Throughout the 100 years of construction, numerous architects, most of them consumed with pride, lofty ambition and

professional jealousy, followed. Among them were Raphael, who died at age 37; Michelangelo, who accepted the job reluctantly at the age of 71; and Giacomo della Porta, who, in 1590, succeeded in raising the grand cupola. All are brought to life in this fascinating tale of genius, power and money. B&w photos not seen by PW. (June) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Just half a millennium ago, Pope Julius II laid the cornerstone for a new basilica of St. Peter. This event not only set to work an extraordinary group of architects and artists but it also led directly to revolution in Western civilization. The pope's need to finance the ambitious project ignited northern Europe's Reformation. In this engaging if uncritical history, Scotti is much less interested in the larger effect of the church's construction than in how successive artists shaped and reshaped the building, how new popes confronted the legacies of their predecessors and left their own imprints on the basilica. Bramante, Michelangelo, and Bernini had major control over one or another aspect of the vast, century-long project, and the building well illustrates the passage from a pure Renaissance aesthetic to the florid, excessive decorative impulses of the baroque. Scotti's recounting of the popular reaction to the destruction of the ancient Constantinian basilica that antedated the present building offers insight into the clash between ancient tradition and contemporary artistic expression. Mark KnoblauchCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am about half way through this book right now. I love it. My husband and I are planning a Rome trip one of these days along with another couple. This book will be required reading before we go. The writing is pleasant. Ofttimes, it is difficult to turn non-fiction and history into a engaging story. This book does it. The author talks about each Pope as if he was that Pope's confidant. I enthusiastically recommend this book for anyone who is traveling to Rome and wants background information, history buffs, or ones who are interested in how a city evolves over time.

This is second-hand derivative history by an author who doesn't have the intellectual context to measure the worth of her information. As history, it is terrible. It is filled with errors and ridiculously over-simplified explanations To make the story more interesting than she is able to find it, the author resorts to two narrative tricks. She attempts a soap opera novelist's style, asserting human interest details which we can't possibly know. And she pads the story with irrelevant digressions. The basilica completely disappears for pages at a time. OK That makes it book length, but not worthy of

a book. Her style is worse. It is prone to cliches and jejeune similies, many of which are absurdly anachronistic. Apparently, she thinks these clarify. They don't. This reads more like a poor term paper than a reliable and interesting history. The real story of THE basilica remains to be told.

When I visited St Peters it's beauty and grandeur captivated me. I left needing to understand the origins of this most beautiful of buildings and reading this book was the start of that journey. As I read of Bramante, Pope Julius, Raphael and Michelangelo and all the others I came to understand this building as the embodiment of mans search for epic greatness. This book discusses the builders in human terms as men of strengths and weaknesses, talents and ambitions, foibles and frailties, and focuses on how they brought their talents to produce this remarkable work of art. This book is a great read and a remarkable history.

This is a very good history on St. Peters Basilica in Rome. I will be reading this one several times.

Great book

Well researched and well written

Great book packed full of historical information.. The amazing stories of many artists, architects, builders and popes, over the ages, each greatly influenced the building the Basilica.

A great read. An insightful account of the building of St. Peter's Basilica. I couldn't put the book down.

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