



# Rome: A Living Portrait of an Ancient City (Ancient Society and History)

*Stephen L. Dyson*

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Stephen L. Dyson has spent a lifetime studying and teaching the history of ancient Rome. That unparalleled knowledge is reflected in his magisterial overview of the Eternal City.

Rather than look only at the physical development of the city—its buildings, monuments, and urban spaces—Dyson also explores its social, economic, and cultural histories. This unique approach situates Rome against a background of comparative urban history and theory, allowing Dyson to examine the dynamic society that once thrived there. In his personal effort to reconstruct the city, Dyson populates its streets with the hurried politicians, hawking vendors, and animated students that once lived, worked, and studied there, bringing the ancient city to life for a new generation of students and tourists.

Dyson follows Rome as it developed between the third century BC and the fourth century AD, dividing the great megalopolis into distinct neighborhoods and locales. He shows how these communities, each with its own unique customs and colorful inhabitants, eventually grew into the great imperial capital of the Italian Empire.

Dyson integrates the full range of sources available—literary, artistic, epigraphic, and archaeological—to create a comprehensive history of the monumental city. In doing so, he offers a dramatic picture of a complex and changing urban center that, despite its flaws, flourished for centuries.

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