

Art and History of Italy | Small Group Tour for seniors

Reading List

Rome: The Biography of a City

by Christopher Hibbert

This beautifully written, informative study is a portrait, a history and a superb guide book, capturing fully the seductive beauty and the many layered past of the Eternal City. It covers 3,000 years of history from the city's quasi-mythical origins, through the Etruscan kings, the opulent glory of classical Rome, the decadence and decay of the Middle Ages and the beauty and corruption of the Renaissance, to its time at the heart of Mussolini's fascist Italy. Exploring the city's streets and buildings, peopled with popes, gladiators, emperors, noblemen and peasants, this volume details the turbulent and dramatic history of Rome in all its depravity and grandeur.

The Popes: A History

by John Julius Norwich

John Julius Norwich examines the oldest continuing institution in the world, tracing the papal line down the centuries from St Peter (traditionally - but by no means historically - the first Pope) to the present. Of the 280-odd holders of the supreme office, some have unquestionably been saints; others have wallowed in unspeakable iniquity.

One was said to have been a woman, her sex being revealed only when she improvidently gave birth to a baby during a papal procession. Almost as shocking was Formosus whose murdered corpse was exhumed, clothed in pontifical vestments, propped up on a throne and subjected to trial.

From the glories of Byzantium to the decay of Rome, from the Albigenian Heresy to controversy within the Church today, The Popes is superbly written, witty and revealing.

Veni, Vidi, Vici: Everything you ever wanted to know about the Romans but were afraid to ask

by Peter Jones

The Romans left a long-lasting legacy and their influence can still be seen all around us - from our calendar and coins, to our language and laws - but how much do we really know about them? Help is

at hand in the form of Veni, Vidi, Vici, which tells the remarkable, and often surprising, story of the Romans and the most enduring empire in history.

Fusing a lively and entertaining narrative with rigorous research, Veni, Vidi, Vici breaks down each major period into a series of concise nuggets that provide a fascinating commentary on every aspect of the Roman world - from plebs to personalities, sauces to sexuality, games to gladiators, poets to punishments, mosaics to medicine and Catullus to Christianity.

Through the twists and turns of his 1250-year itinerary, Peter Jones is a friendly and clear-thinking guide. In this book he has produced a beguiling and entertaining introduction to the Romans, one that vividly brings to life the people who helped create the world we live in today.
