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978-1-107-04164-6 - Old Saint Peter's, Rome

Edited by Rosamond Mckitterick, John Osborne, Carol M. Richardson and Joanna Story

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## Old Saint Peter's, Rome

Saint Peter's basilica in Rome is arguably the most important church in western Christendom, and is among the most significant buildings anywhere in the world. However, the church that is visible today is a youthful upstart, only four hundred years old in comparison with the twelve-hundred-year-old church whose site it occupies. A very small proportion of the original is now extant, entirely covered over by the new basilica, but enough survives to make reconstruction of the first Saint Peter's possible and much new evidence has been uncovered in the past thirty years. This is the first full study of the older church, from its late antique construction to Renaissance destruction, in its historical context. An international team of historians, art historians, archaeologists and liturgists explores aspects of the basilica's history, from its physical fabric to the activities that took place within its walls and its relationship with the city of Rome.

ROSAMOND MCKITTERICK is Professor of Medieval History in the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Sidney Sussex College. She has published on literacy, manuscript transmission, perceptions of the past and political culture in the early Middle Ages. In addition to many articles, chapters in books, edited books and monographs, her most recent books include *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), *Charlemagne: the Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008) and *Rome across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500–1400* (with C. Bolgia and J. Osborne, Cambridge, 2011).

JOHN OSBORNE is Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Carleton University in Ottawa. His publications cover topics as varied as the Roman catacombs, the fragmentary mural paintings from excavated churches such as San Clemente and Santa Maria Antiqua, the decorative programme of the church of San Marco in Venice, seventeenth-century antiquarian drawings of medieval monuments, cultural transmission between western Europe and Byzantium, and the medieval understanding and use of Rome's heritage of ancient buildings and statuary.

CAROL M. RICHARDSON is Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Edinburgh. Her book *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (2009) was described as a 'milestone in the history not only of artistic patronage but also of the papacy in fifteenth-century Rome [which] will become a standard work for scholars to return to again and again' (Simon Ditchfield, *Art History* 34/1 (2011)). She has also edited a number of Open University text books which are widely used to teach history of art on both sides of the Atlantic.

JOANNA STORY is Professor of Early Medieval History at the University of Leicester, specializing in interdisciplinary research into the history and archaeology of Europe in the age of Charlemagne. She has published widely on the contacts between Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent at this time, focusing especially on manuscripts and inscriptions, and the links between England and Rome.

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*For Maria Pia Malvezzi*

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together to reassemble fragments of detached fresco painting following the 1997 earthquake that damaged paintings in the upper church at Assisi. Her publications include contributions to the *Corpus-Atlante della pittura medievale a Roma (IV–XV secolo)*.

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## Foreword

We all think we know Saint Peter's basilica, the vision of Pope Julius II and great temple of Michelangelo Buonarroti, Donato Bramante, Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. What we forget is that this masterpiece of European architecture was not the building that for twelve hundred years, following the victory of the Christian Emperor Constantine, was recognized as the most important religious and pilgrimage site in Europe. The pilgrims who flocked to Rome in 1300 for Boniface VIII's first great Holy Year gazed weary, footsore but jubilant, on a different basilica. Constantine's Old Saint Peter's was the centrifuge of Europe, where emperors were crowned – the last being Frederick III in 1452 – and from which, high above the tomb of Saint Peter, the first 216 of God's Vicars on Earth derived their authority. It dominated a Rome before the Farnese, Borgia, Medici and Della Rovere parvenus, before the disastrous Sack of 1527, a still visible reminder of the early, pre-Schism Church when Rome and Constantinople were one, and Reform no more than a distant gleam in a Lollard's eye.

The rediscovery of Old Saint Peter's as it emerges from the historical and architectural shadow cast by its great successor is redolent of a detective story in the finest tradition of the genre. It is a tale of alternative endings, twists in the plot, archaeological red herrings and a cast of characters, heroes and some villains (including, it must be said, lurking off stage left, that great architect known to some contemporaries as 'Bramante *ruinante*'), not all of whom are what they initially appear. It is also a story of the Roman palimpsest – architectural, liturgical, artistic and historical – on whose surface the tracings of nearly forgotten dynasties, forms of worship, ceremonies and ideas may still be discerned.

Through the collective and collaborative scholarship of this extraordinary volume, Old Saint Peter's emerges once again in its late antique splendour and ramshackle high medieval glory. As we learn from these pages, this was no cold, empty shell, but a glittering repository of holy (and profane) function, a shrine, treasure-house, mausoleum, place of ecclesiastical encounter and pilgrims' destiny, the site of worship, display, patronage and propaganda. And we learn how papacy and Rome developed together, in a

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complex and uneven symbiosis of growth, triumph, decline and resurrection, the one nourished from the physical, spiritual and imperial legacy of the other. This is a Rome we can no longer touch, and barely discern, but it remains still an essential component of the city's soul.

The British School at Rome has for more than a hundred years led the way in the application of academic rigour and new perspectives to the Roman mosaic. Its dedication to the eternal study of the *fumen et opes strepitumque Romae*, of how the tesserae of the city's history have been re-laid and re-assembled by its successive masters, continues to illuminate and reveal the historical, artistic and cultural realities of the Eternal City, even in the obscurest or most forgotten (conveniently or otherwise) corners of its past. As Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See, I am delighted to be supporting this further, multidisciplinary contribution to that academic detective story. All Roman journeys require collaboration. This volume is the fruitful result of the British School's partnership with Cambridge University Press, brought together with the vital support of the Vatican authorities, particularly the Fabbrica di San Pietro in Vaticano, that essential reference point for all scholars wishing to explore the history of Saint Peter's basilica, Old or New.

Turning these pages reveals a different, unexpected Rome to the one that confronts us most obviously today. Its (re)discovery requires us to adjust our sights and reappraise what we know. In presenting the fruits of their scholarly labours, all who have collaborated on this volume have done us a great service. We shall no longer be able to look on Saint Peter's through the same historical lens.

Nigel Baker

*Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See*

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Professor Pietro Zander and his colleagues at the Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro in Vaticano have been unfailingly helpful and generous with their time, expertise and access to the basilica; we are immensely grateful to them. Without their careful custodianship of the site and its documentary records, none of our work would be possible.

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## Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
Alfarano, <i>DBVS</i>	T. Alfarano, <i>De Basilicae Vaticanae Structura</i> , M. Cerrati (ed.), <i>Tiberii Alpharani De Basilicae Vaticanae Antiquissima et Nova Structura</i> (Studi e testi 26) (Rome, 1914)
Andrieu, <i>OR</i>	M. Andrieu (ed.), <i>Les 'Ordines Romani' du haut Moyen Âge</i> , 5 vols. (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 11, 23, 24, 28, 29) (Louvain, 1931–61)
Arch. Cap. S. Pietro	Archivio Capitolare di San Pietro (BAV)
Baronio, <i>AE</i>	Cesare Baronio (Caesar Baronius), <i>Annales Ecclesiastici</i> , 12 vols. (Rome, 1588–1607; Antwerp, 1597–1609; Mainz, 1601–8)
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis</i> (Brussels, 1898–1901); <i>Novum Supplementum</i> (1986)
Blaauw, <i>CD</i>	S. de Blaauw, <i>Cultus et Decor: liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale</i> , 2 vols. (Vatican City, 1994)
<i>BSPV</i>	A. Pinelli (ed.), <i>Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano/The Basilica of St Peter in the Vatican</i> , 4 vols. (Modena, 2000)
<i>CBB</i>	<i>Collectio Bullarum Brevium Aliorumque Diplomatum Sacrosancte Basilicae Vaticanae</i> , 3 vols. (Rome, 1747–52)
<i>CBCR</i>	R. Krautheimer, A. K. Frazer and S. Corbett, <i>Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae: the Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV–IX Cent.)</i> , 5 vols. (Vatican City, 1937–77)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , ed. Deutsches Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 17 vols. (Berlin, 1862)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
xxviii	CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

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Davis, <i>Book of Pontiffs</i>	R. Davis, <i>The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): the Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715</i> (third revised edition, Liverpool, 2010)
Davis, <i>Eighth-Century Popes</i>	R. Davis, <i>The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)</i> (Liverpool, 1992)
Davis, <i>Ninth-Century Lives</i>	R. Davis, <i>The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes</i> (Liverpool, 1995)
DBV	'Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae': Valentini–Zucchetti, <i>Codice</i> III, 375–442
DBV–M	DBV, redaction by Mallius (c. 1154)
DBV–R	DBV, redaction by Romanus (1192–8)
<i>Esplorazioni</i>	B. Apollonj Ghetti, A. Ferrua, E. Jossi and E. Kirschbaum, <i>Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano eseguite negli anni 1940–1949</i> , 2 vols. (Vatican City, 1951)
Ferrua	A. Ferrua, <i>Epigrammata Damasiana</i> (Vatican City, 1942)
Grimaldi	G. Grimaldi, <i>Descrizione della basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano: codice Barberini latino 2733</i> , R. Niggel (ed.) ( <i>Codices e Vaticanis selecti</i> 32) (Vatican City, 1972)
ICUR	G. B. de Rossi (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae</i> , 2 vols. (Rome, 1857–88)
ICUR-NS	G. B. de Rossi, A. Silvagni and A. Ferrua (eds.), <i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae. Nova Series</i> , 8 vols. (Rome, 1922–83)
IILCV	E. Diehl (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i> (Berlin, 1925)
ILS	H. Dessau (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (Berlin, 1892–1916)
LP	L. Duchesne (ed.), <i>Le Liber Pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire</i> , 2 vols. (Paris, 1886–92; Additions and corrections, C. Vogel (ed.), Paris, 1957), cited subsequently as LP, I, II with <i>vita</i> number, chapter (where relevant) and page reference (for example: Life 96, c. 4, LP, I, 469)
LTUR	E. M. Steinby (ed.), <i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae</i> , 6 vols. (Rome, 1993–2000)
LTURS	A. La Regina (ed.), <i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae Suburbium</i> , 5 vols. (Rome, 2001–8)

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*List of abbreviations*

MAH	<i>Mélanges d'Archeologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MGH, AA	MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina</i> (Paris, 1844–90, supplement 1957–74)
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris (eds.), <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1971–92)
RB	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
RFSP	Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro in Vaticano
RIS	Rerum Italicarum Scriptores
RJBH	<i>Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana</i>
SPL	San Pietro Legendary
Valentini–Zucchetti	R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti (eds.), <i>Codice topografico della città di Roma</i> , 4 vols. (Rome, 1940–53)