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THE BATHS OF CARACALLA

A study in the design, construction, and economics of large-scale building projects in imperial Rome

by Janet DeLaine

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Cloth, 272 pages, 77 halftones, 35 line drawings, 7 folded drawings in pocket at back.

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From the introduction:

"To arrive at a finished building requires human action in design, in the supply of building materials, and in construction -- the three generating processes of architecture. This study explores these processes and the wider social, economic and political implications of large-scale public construction in the imperial capital by concentrating on a single structure, the Baths of Caracalla. This building is accepted as one of the major achievements of the mature phase of Roman architecture. It should represent the most sophisticated building technology available at any time to Roman architects and builders. At the same time it was neither particularly innovative nor particularly eccentric in design or construction. The scale and complexity of the building must have challenged organization and resources, but its imperial authorship ensured that the challenge was met. Thus it stands as both paragon and paradigm in the universe of imperial construction, illustrating at one and the same time the capabilities and limitations of the Roman building industry."