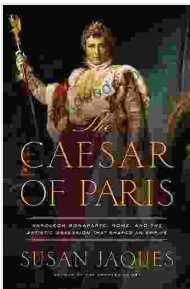


Napoleon Bonaparte, Rome, and the Artistic Obsession That Shaped an Empire

Napoleon Bonaparte's reign as Emperor of France was marked by an intense fascination with ancient Rome and its art. This obsession profoundly influenced his military campaigns, his architectural legacy, and the development of French art. Napoleon saw himself as a direct successor to the Roman emperors, and he sought to emulate their grandeur and glory.



The Caesar of Paris: Napoleon Bonaparte, Rome, and the Artistic Obsession that Shaped an Empire

by Susan Jaques

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 97475 KB
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Screen Reader	: Supported
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Napoleon's first encounter with Rome came during his Italian campaign of 1796-1797. He was awestruck by the ruins of the ancient city and its classical art. He ordered his troops to respect the monuments and to collect

works of art to send back to Paris. These works formed the basis of the Louvre Museum's collection of classical antiquities.

Napoleon's artistic obsession was not limited to collecting works of art. He also commissioned new works that were inspired by Roman models. The Arc de Triomphe, built to commemorate Napoleon's victories, is a direct copy of the Roman Arch of Titus. The Louvre Museum was redesigned in a neoclassical style, and its galleries were filled with sculptures and paintings that depicted scenes from Roman history.

Napoleon's artistic patronage also had a significant impact on the development of French art. He promoted the neoclassical style, which rejected the Rococo style of the previous century and sought to revive the classical ideals of beauty and harmony. The neoclassical style was adopted by many French artists, including Jacques-Louis David and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.

Napoleon's fascination with Rome also extended to his own personal life. He adopted the Roman title of "Emperor" and wore a laurel wreath, reminiscent of the Roman emperors. He also commissioned a series of portraits of himself that depicted him in a Roman toga or as a Roman general. These portraits were intended to create an image of Napoleon as a modern-day Caesar.

Napoleon's artistic obsession had a lasting impact on Western civilization. The neoclassical style that he promoted became the dominant style of art and architecture in Europe and America for much of the 19th century. His fascination with Rome also contributed to the rise of Romanticism, a movement that emphasized the importance of emotion and individual

expression. Napoleon's legacy as a patron of the arts continues to inspire artists and architects today.

Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign

Napoleon's fascination with ancient Rome was not limited to its art and architecture. He was also intrigued by the Egyptian campaign of Alexander the Great. In 1798, Napoleon led an expedition to Egypt with the goal of conquering the country and establishing a new empire in the East. The expedition was a disaster, but it did have a significant impact on Napoleon's artistic vision.

The Egyptian campaign exposed Napoleon to a new world of art and architecture. He was particularly impressed by the pyramids and the temples of Karnak. He ordered his artists to make drawings and paintings of these monuments, and he sent many of them back to Paris. These works had a significant impact on the development of French art, and they helped to inspire the Orientalist movement of the 19th century.

Napoleon's Legacy

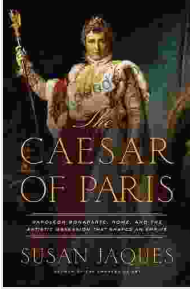
Napoleon Bonaparte's reign was a watershed moment in the history of art and architecture. His fascination with ancient Rome and his obsession with creating a new empire in the East helped to shape the artistic landscape of the 19th century. His legacy as a patron of the arts continues to inspire artists and architects today.

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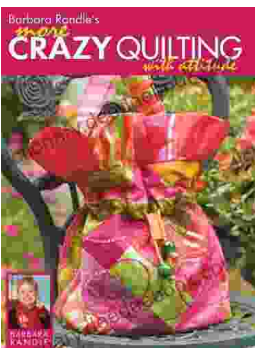
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