

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Following Caesar: From Rome to Constantinople, the Pathways That Planted the Seeds of Empire.

By John Keahey

Dec. 2023. 256p. St. Martin's, \$30 (9781250792402); e-book (9781250792419). 914

When Julius Caesar traveled the now-famous Via Appia (or Appian Way), he improved the ancient roadway, thus earning the gratitude and support of towns beyond Rome. Today, parts of it are preserved as archaeological ruins. To unfurl the story of the empire-making roadway, John Keahey (*Hidden Tuscany*, 2014) takes up the challenge of traversing it, and then journeys much farther. He roams the boot of Italy, sails the Adriatic Sea, and crosses the Balkan peninsula. There he takes up the Via Egnatia to its terminus at the Eastern Roman Empire's capital, Constantinople, now Istanbul. Referenced by the poet Horace and vital to imperial Roman history, the Via Egnatia was the road the apostle Paul traveled to reach nascent Christian churches in ancient cities such as Philippi. As Keahey relates, parts of these ancient roads are now virtually abandoned or replaced by modern motorways, and he has to turn to knowledgeable locals to ferret out the original paths. Readers following Keahey's detailed history and geography may want to consult internet maps to supplement the book's outline ones.

— *Mark Knoblauch*