

INSIDE ROME  
WITH  
THE GERMANS

By JANE SCRIVENER

O Roma nobilis  
Orbis et domina  
Cunctorum urbium  
Excellentissima.

—*Ancient pilgrim chant*

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Every night at present a strange solitary plane flies low over Rome and circles round the Vatican City. Some people are nervous lest it should drop explosives, particularly on the Vatican as it is believed that it belongs to the Farinacci group of ultra-Fascists. It is also believed that the same group, rather than the Allies, has been responsible for the damage done at Castel Gandolfo. It is very easy to fake the markings on a plane, as far as that goes, and in the dust and confusion few onlookers would be able to spot its make. That odd lonely plane that visits us nightly has several amusing names: "the phantom ship," "the solitary one," "*il Romanino*." You wonder really how it does not crash into some of the bell towers of the churches in the dark. I find it rather companionable on the whole. Its presence is perhaps more a gesture than anything else, since hundreds of Allied planes fly high over the city during the day, while this one consoles itself by flying low at night.