



# Pauline Bonaparte: Venus of Empire

*Flora Fraser*

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## **Pauline Bonaparte: Venus of Empire** Flora Fraser

From acclaimed biographer Flora Fraser, the brilliant life of Napoleon's favorite sister. Celebrated for her looks, notorious for her passions, immortalized by Antonio Canova's statue, and always deeply loyal to her brother, Pauline Bonaparte Borghese is a fascinating figure in her own right.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, she was considered by many to be the most beautiful woman in Europe. She shocked the continent with the boldness of her love affairs, her opulent wardrobe and jewels, and, most famously, her decision to pose nearly nude for Canova's sculpture, which has been replicated in countless ways through the years. But just as remarkable as Pauline's private life was her fidelity to the emperor (if not to her husbands). She was present for Napoleon's great victories in Italy, and she was often at Malmaison with her brother and her rival for his loyalty, the empress Josephine. When he was exiled to Elba, Pauline was the only sibling to follow him there, and after the final defeat at Waterloo she begged to be allowed to join him at Saint Helena.

No biographer has gone so deeply into the sources or so closely examined one of the seminal relationships of the man who shaped modern Europe. In *Pauline Bonaparte: Venus of Empire*, Flora Fraser has cast new light on the Napoleonic era while crafting a dynamic, vivid portrait of a mesmerizing woman.

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