



The Roman Search for Wisdom

Michael K. Kellogg

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The Roman "philosophy of life" as mirrored in the literature of ten outstanding representative authors

Though Rome conquered much of the world and established an empire that lasted more than a millennium, its citizens sometimes expressed a sense of inferiority to the intellectual accomplishments of ancient Greece. The notion that Roman philosophers, thinkers, and writers were just pale imitations of Greek originals has persisted to this day. Even the great Roman poet Horace wrote, "Captive Greece took its Roman captor captive,/ Invading uncouth Latium with its arts."

Michael K. Kellogg puts this notion to rest in this lively, very readable overview of Roman literature. The author uncovers many examples of Roman wisdom, showing that the Roman contribution to intellectual history is considerable and need not take second place to ancient Greek literature.

Kellogg offers fresh and engaging portraits of poets (Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Ovid); dramatists (Plautus, Terence, Seneca); biographers (Plutarch, Suetonius); historians (Livy, Tacitus); and philosophers (Cicero, Marcus Aurelius), against the background of Roman history.

The contemporary reader will come away from this excellent survey with the realization that even today our culture still bears the lasting imprint of ancient Rome.

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