



The Classical Roman Reader: New Encounters with Ancient Rome

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Western civilization is in many ways an outgrowth of the Roman Empire. The Classical Roman Reader, which contains a collection of some of the finest and most important writing of the Roman period, brings the modern reader into direct contact with the literature, political thought, science, art and architecture, and psychology of classical Rome. Here are the wonders of the Roman world presented in a modern, accessible manner. Each selection is preceded by an introduction that identifies the author and provides information that allows modern readers to consider these texts in a new light. What we discover might be surprising. For instance, in Cicero's orations and Marcus Aurelius' meditations, we hear echoes of today's political forums and popular-psychology talk-show hosts. Virgil's ironic dramatization of the founding myth in the Aeneid prepared the way for America's deeply embedded ambivalence toward the presidency. The Roman preference for practicality over philosophy, leading to a network of superhighways that joined Europe, Asia, Asia Minor, and Africa, literally paved the way for the "global village" of the contemporary world. From Plautus' wildly comic plays to Cato's instructions on farming, and from Catullus' erotic poems to Petronius' descriptions of the decadent splendor of the declining empire, The Classical Roman Reader provides access to the literary, artistic, social, religious, political, scientific, and philosophical texts that shaped Roman thinking and helped form the backbone of Western culture.



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