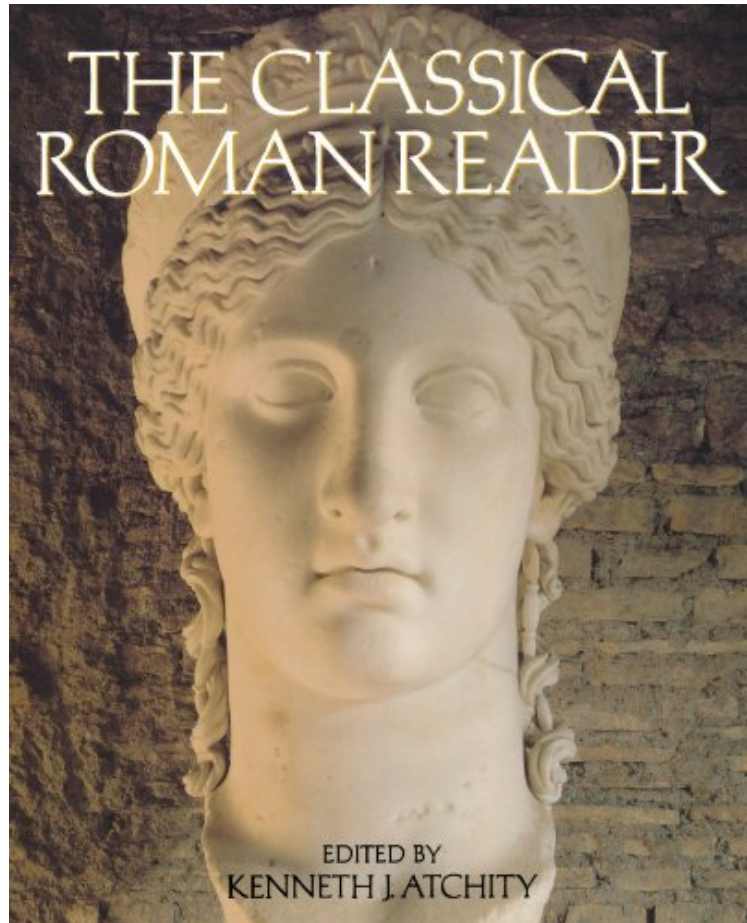


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## The Classical Roman Reader: New Encounters with Ancient Rome

*From Kenneth J Atchity*  
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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.

From Booklist Most libraries ought to stock an anthology of Roman literature, and Atchity's reader ably fills the bill. Excerpts by well-known authors are here--Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal--but so too are nonartistic authors who exemplify Rome's characteristic emphasis on the practical over the abstract. Cato the Elder instructs on running a farm; Vitruvius explains how to design classical buildings in his still-influential textbook; a cook lists recipes; and a doctor teaches about gynecology. The items about literature and living are arranged in chronological order, as are Atchity's selection of works of politics and history. Sensing a need to excite newcomers to the subject, he chooses such interesting extent pieces as Caesar's account of conquering Gaul, Augustus' bragging of his accomplishments, and the histories by Sallust, Tacitus, and Suetonius. For those uninitiated to Rome's written legacy but eager to meet it, this varied set of readings makes a memorable match. Gilbert Taylor "This reader for students new to the Roman world meets with moderate success. Atchity deserves commendations for including authors not normally found in English translation surveys.... The diversity of voices and topics, drawn from 700 years of Roman history, allows for a fairly complete overview not afforded by most Latin readers.... This book is recommended for all undergraduate libraries."--Religious Studies, David Christiansen, Truman State University "As in the case of "The Classical Greek Reader," I found this collection interesting and well-balanced. The student will not become an expert in Rome through this book alone, yet by the time he/she finishes the book, he/she will have a reliable understanding of the Roman thought in a variety of fields. The book itself is attractive and inviting."--Ippokratis Kantzios, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey "Excellent, much needed anthology."--C.S. Kraszewski, King's College "The variety of authors is wonderful. It provides the opportunity to introduce students both to well known names and to completely new individuals."--T. Davina McClain, Loyola University, New Orleans "The selections give an excellent overview of Roman life and letters. This book will make enlightening reading for the serious undergraduate student of Roman civilization."--Patricia Matsen, University of South Carolina About the Author Kenneth J. Atchity, a former professor at Occidental College and Fulbright Professor at the University of Bologna, is the author and editor of many books, including The Renaissance Reader, Homer's Iliad, Homer: Critical Essays, and The Classical Greek Reader.