were slightly enlarged also. These proportions seemed to appeal to the Romans, in part because they were shorter and stockier in build, above the more elongated and slightly effeminate figure of the late Classical age. Like the Greeks, the Romans had a tradition of votive and commemorative sculpture, and the ultra-realistic portrait was much admired and used extensively.

Romanized Hellenistic sculpture became the model for the artistic theories of the French Neoclassicists David and Ingres in the early nineteenth century. Among important examples of Romanized Hellenistic sculpture are such works as the *Belvedere Torso, Melos Aphrodite* (*Venus de Milo*), and the *Apollo Belvedere* from the first century. The "orator" pose of Greek origin and popular with the Etruscans is admirably expressed in *Augustus of Primaporta* (c. 20 B.C.). The famous Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace, c. 9 B.C.) contains outstanding examples of Roman relief carving, very realistic and deeply cut to pick up light for maximum three-dimensional effect.

Since Roman houses did not have wall windows, a great amount of wall painting was done, but little remains today. Among the few examples extant, the Pompeii paintings have been discussed earlier in this unit. Many Roman mosaics, which were copies of admired Greek painting, were done in both public and private buildings. Mosaics were very practical in the baths because they were impervious to steam, heat, and water. Recently, outstanding examples were found in Britain under bombed buildings.

When we turn to architecture, there is little disagreement about the achievement of the Romans. They were the first true architects according to definition, because they concerned themselves with the enclosure of useful space as an integral part of the problem of architecture. Important buildings, as we have discussed in previous units, had been built prior to the triumph of Rome. Some, like the temples at Karnak, were immense, and the ziggurat at Babylon, though an inert mass, was of considerable size. The beautiful balance of the elements of the Parthenon is magnificent. But in all of these examples, the most totally elementary construction principle was applied--the post and lintel. In none of these buildings was interior space a factor of significance. The larger the building, the less usable interior space, because the weight of the beam itself determined the spacing of the columns in proportion to that weight. With the post and lintel, a sophisticated understanding of engineering was unnecessary.

Roman building, on the other hand, was dependent on a successful marriage of architecture and engineering, and this relationship has been crucial to all major building since that time. Without an understanding of the structural principles of the arch and of the vault (a combination of arches), Roman building would not have been possible. Without the knowledge of the arch, the construction of domes would not have been possible either.

The Roman taste for Greek styles is present in architecture too, but, generally speaking, the Greek orders were seldom used structurally. Most

often elements of Greek styles were used ornamentally in the form of engaged columns to break up large surfaces of masonry and concrete. Though the more ornate Corinthian order, frequently embellished, was preferred, Roman architects had no hesitation about mixing the orders together with some of their own inventions (the pilaster column). Arches, not columns, carried the weight and stress.

There is very little important architecture from the republic (c. 150-27 B.C.). Both temples and houses were inspired by Greek or Etruscan styles and were usually made of brick, which was sometimes faced. The *tholos* (round temples from Hellenistic Greece) had been utilized for a long time on a small, shrine-like scale merely to cover a piece of statuary, and some larger versions were constructed during the republic to be used as both temples and civic gathering places. The Ionic order was quite often employed in the colonnade around the central cella. Other temples were typical Etruscan raised platform buildings with full-front staircases for access. The Romans, ever conscious of wasted space, abandoned the colonnade (as had the Etruscans) and confined the use of columns to the portico. The small temple at Nimes, France, (c. 27 B.C.) is a fine example of this style.

The Roman preference for the arch and the understanding of its possibilities came early in Rome's history. Since this construction principle allowed monumental building, it was utilized to reflect the Roman passion for doing things on a colossal scale. A succession of forums, baths, and basilicas were built in this system, and they are the buildings we seem to associate with the Roman Empire. Examples are found not only in Rome itself but in other areas of the empire as well.

One of the earliest monumental structures is the Colosseum in Rome, completed in A.D. 80. It is not only a triumph of engineering but also a masterpiece of beautifully expressed functionalism. The arena could be emptied of a capacity crowd of around 50,000 people in minutes by an ingenious use of a network of ramps leading through its thick, tunnel-like arches. The Colosseum illustrates the use of Greek orders purely for ornamentation. All three Greek orders are used in the form of engaged columns--Doric on the first level, Ionic on the second, Corinthian on the third, and Roman pilaster on the top. None bear any stress or, except for the decorative cornice bands, any weight.

The Pantheon, first built by Agrippa in 27 B.C. without its present dome, was ruined by fire in A.D. 117 and rebuilt under Hadrian in the second century A.D. A huge drum to support the coffered dome was added to the old building (an Etruscan style temple), which now functions as an entrance, or portico. The main part of the building is a cylinder, the diameter of which is equal to the height of the dome from floor to apex. The drum is twenty feet thick at the base and six feet thick at the top. It is constructed of concrete and rubble, the exterior of which was faced with marble at one.time. The coffers (recessed squares) grow progressively smaller in size as the dome reaches its apex. The coffers provide strength as well as a handsome decorative motif to the dome. Behind the interior face of the coffered dome are support

buttresses of brick and concrete to absorb the outward thrust of the spring of the dome 143 feet off the floor. At the apex is an ocular (opening) to let in light. Around the base of the drum are seven alcoves where sculptures of the seven gods once rested. The purpose of the temple was to combine several features of many religions into one state religion. The Pantheon survives not only because of the magnificent technical perfection of its construction but also because it became a Christian church in 609; and it continues to be used as one to this day (St. Maria Rotonda).

A perfect architectural order, if not esthetic balance in the Greek Parthenon sense, was achieved in the Imperial Forum on a genuinely grand scale. The Imperial Forum is actually a collection of five forums, the first built by Caesar during the last days of the republic. Over the years, during the great days of the empire, the forums of Augustus, Trajan, Nerva, and the Forum of Peace (Pax Romana) were constructed adjacent to it. The great Basilica of Trajan, built by the Greek architect Apollodorus of Damascus, forms a right angle with the huge courtyard, and just outside of it is Trajan's Column. Trajan's Forum completes the symmetrical and unified complex.

The Roman emphasis on the importance of symmetry is also carried out in the baths which were built in Rome and in the main cities of the outposts of the empire. The two most important ones in Rome are the Baths of Caracalla and of Diocletian. Individual baths differed slightly in plan but all had the following features in common:

1. A series of rooms which got progressively warmer, from the cold room (*frigidarium*) through the warm room (*tepidarium*) to the hot room (*calarium*). Heat for the last two rooms was provided by a basement furnace that forced hot air into the hollow walls.

2. Drying and dressing rooms.

3. Open-air exercise areas with outdoor pools (for exercise rather than for bathing).

4. A library and other rooms for conversation and relaxation.

Every major Roman city had a basilica, which was a kind of seat and symbol of imperial power and government. The basilica style was adopted from the Egyptian courtyard temple of the New Kingdom. The Egyptian building plan lent itself beautifully to the use of arcade and vault engineering. Where the Egyptian courtyard temple had almost no floor space because of the column requirements, the basilica, with the use of vaulting, contained a great amount of usable area. The nave and atrium transected by a lateral formed a cross. When Christianity became legalized, many of the basilicas were used as churches, and the cross plan took on a symbolic significance. Indeed, the basilica plan (with some basic engineering differences in Gothic times) became the model for Christian churches down through the centuries. The clerestory of Egyptian architecture was

retained for both the basilica and for Christian churches. Constantine's Basilica is one of the most impressive, believed to have been the largest roofed interior in Rome.

Other important Roman architecture included the villas of the wealthy, built in the hills surrounding the city, and such magnificent imperial palaces as those of Flavius, Hadrian, and Diocletian. Diocletian also built a palace for his retirement at Split, Yugoslavia. Like the baths and the basilicas, these are basically symmetrical in character.

Not strictly architecture, but most imposing nevertheless, were the triumphal arches. In reality they were massive barrel vaults, usually over roadways, decorated with statuary and relief commemorating various emperors and their exploits. They are typically Roman in self-aggrandizement.

They also point up something that is a very basic criticism of Roman architecture generally--the failure to comprehend the fundamental relationship between architecture and engineering in building. This can be seen by contrasting the Pont du Gard (or any other aqueduct or bridge) to the triumphal arches. The Romans considered the aqueduct structurally utilitarian and functional, and so left it uncluttered with ornamentation, whereas the triumphal arches were frosted with decoration which submerged the structural brilliance. In most buildings it would seem that as soon as the engineers and architects left, the decorators took over and promptly concealed the essential structure of the building. Fortunately, much of the bric-a-brac and embellishment has fallen off, and we can be duly impressed by the engineering and architectural concept of encompassing space.

In addition to this lack of integration of the elements of building, Roman decoration is inferior to Egyptian and Greek both in terms of execution and craftsmanship. If decoration is to be successful, it must not only be completely integrated with structure but it must also be of high quality.

In spite of these faults, there is absolutely no question of the importance of Roman architecture in terms of the major architecture of later periods. Although strength and support through precision of calculation and use of modern materials has replaced the old Roman system of strength through bulk and mass, many of their principles still apply.

By the third century A.D. Rome had already lived through nearly one hundred years of continuing crisis. Barbarians had pressed at the borders of the empire for a long time, and in the third century Rome had been subjected to quick barbarian raids and sackings. Christianity had gained a great deal of momentum by the turn of the fourth century, and it was no longer politically feasible to restrict its growth. To shore up the shattering empire, Constantine published the Edict of Milan, making the new religion legal in 313. Shortly afterwards he divided the western portion of the old empire among his generals and abandoned Rome to build his new capital at Byzantium (later Constantinople) in the hope

that he could hold the eastern part intact. The last two hundred years prior to the official collapse of the Roman Empire are more properly part of the next unit.

R.W.N.
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LITERATURE

If, through the past centuries, popularity is any measure of excellence, then the literature of Greece outranks that of the Roman Empire; yet such a comparison is too limiting and yields but a partial judgment. It tends to dismiss Roman writing as mainly derivative or imitative, lacking the inspiration, individuality, and sensitivity associated with Greek literature. Granted, the Romans never produced tragedy of any great consequence, and their comedy owed much to Greek models. They possessed no Homer, nor even a Hesiod, to provide them with legends or a highly developed mythology from which to work. But to complain of their dependence upon Greek forms and style in the early centuries is to ignore the considerable body of fine writing produced during Rome's Golden Age of literature (approximately 70 B.C.-A.D. 43). One reason, perhaps, for the unfavorable comparison is our own idea of what constitutes a literature. Roman eminence in oratory, history, letters, grammatical and critical studies, and jurisprudence is acknowledged, but little is read today except by students of language, law, history, and classics. Such works reflect a Roman interest in practical scholarship which, although it differs from our own interest in "pure" literature, nevertheless laid the foundations of a prose style which has been admired and emulated to this day.

To make any general statement about the characteristics of Latin literature over the span of the eight hundred years that this unit covers would lead to distortion and/or oversimplification. The enormous social, political, and ideological changes as well as the diverse influences of conquered or "liberated" countries all contributed to produce varied and differing kinds of writing. Even so, it is possible to discern some qualities of Roman character that shaped its literature. From the earliest preserved ballads, Romans were shown to be a practical-minded people bent on survival. With their rise to power, much of the literature stressed the manliness associated with the battlefield. Certainly their sense of national pride and world mission made them favor and excel in works that glorified the Roman way of life with its belief in obedience, duty, and respect for traditional values, especially during the reign of Augustus. Roman seriousness of purpose, industry, and discipline, though they may have imparted a somewhat heavy quality to their prose, nevertheless produced a literature of vitality and individuality.

Latin literature had several important stages, beginning in the third century B.C. with the dramatists who imitated late Greek New Comedy. Plautus (c. 254-184 B.C.), who left approximately twenty comedies (although he probably wrote more than a hundred), built directly on the dramatic tradition of Greece by translating Menander's New Comedies,

adding puns, jokes, songs, and occasionally changing plots. His broad humor suggests that he was perhaps an actor in one of the local troupes that performed crowd-pleasing skits to the lower classes. Using Greek characters in Greek settings, he mocked them extravagantly for the pleasure of early Roman audiences, who enjoyed laughing at their more dissolute albeit cultured Mediterranean neighbors. Although his plots are not outstanding in themselves--primarily involving trickery within a boy-gets-girl context--his racy, inventive tongue developed a comic gallery of characters: credulous, pompous, senile fools; unattractive and unwanted wives; greedy pimps; and clever servants or slaves who often control the action through ingenious duplicity. Doubles or twins figure frequently in such comic masterpieces as the *Menaechmae* (or *The Brothers Menaechmus*, from which Shakespeare adapted the *Comedy of Errors* and Rodgers and Hart created *The Boys from Syracuse*); *Amphitryon*, where Mercury becomes the twin of a slave; and *Miles Gloriosus* (*The Braggart Soldier*), where the clever slave arranges for the heroine to become her own twin in order to dupe the outrageously vain soldier. Another play, *Aulularia* (*The Pot of Gold*), about a miser who loses his treasure because of his own fear that he will do so, became the basis for Moliere's *The Miser*. In these plays, as in most of his work, Plautus' ability to milk every laugh has its basis in comic irony, where the audience knows what will happen (he usually provides monologues early in the play to explain the action) and thereby delights in the absurdities as they are revealed over and over again in burlesque fashion. *Mostellaria* (*The Haunted House*), *Pseudolus*, and *Casina*, as well as the aforementioned plays, are excellent examples of Plautine variety, vigor, and verbal extravagance.

Terence (c. 195-159 B.C.) is the only other Roman comic playwright whose works have survived, though the theater of the second century B.C. and later doubtless employed many other writers. Born a slave in Africa, he was reared and educated in a great Roman household and later freed. Unlike Plautus, who sought to tickle the crowds with his coarse humor, Terence wrote to please a more civilized, sophisticated audience with the kind of tasteful, well-plotted romantic comedy that invites smiles rather than guffaws. He wrote six recreations from Menander, all polished, beautifully constructed, and nicely adapted to the temper of his own age and audience.

Over 150 years elapsed before the appearance of the third major Latin playwright, Seneca (c. 4 B.C.-A.D. 65), a Stoic philosopher who was first the tutor and finally the victim of the mad emperor Nero. Seneca left nine tragedies among many other writings, chiefly philosophical prose. He was pessimistic, scholarly, a sincere admirer of the Greek tragedies that he adapted for a jaded Roman society on the brink of decadence. Current critical opinion holds Seneca's poetic tragedies in rather low esteem, judging them too slow and too declamatory to be playable; but they were extremely popular during the Renaissance in Italy, France, and especially England, where his vivid portrayal of ghosts and bloody deeds of horror, couched in lofty rhetoric, greatly influenced Elizabethan playwrights.

The Roman poets, like the dramatists, admired the Greeks, using their themes, poetic patterns, and motifs as models. Two of the first recorded poets--Livius Andronicus (fl. 240 B.C.), a Greek slave brought to Rome, and Naevius (fl. 200 B.C.), a Roman--used Greek meters, but compared with later Roman poetry, their work seems rather unrefined and mediocre. Of somewhat more imposing stature was Ennius (239-169 B.C.), whose epic poem the *Annales*, remained the national poem of Rome until it was replaced by Vergil's *Aeneid*.

The earliest major poets do not appear until the first century B.C. Catullus (c. 84-54 B.C.) was one of Rome's great lyric poets as well as one of the greatest translators of the Greek poetess Sappho. Although he wrote over 125 poems, he is best known to modern readers for his 25 poems to Lesbia (Lesbos was the island home of Sappho). Lesbia was the name Catullus used to address the woman who became the emotional center of his life. Her real name was Clodia Metelli. Ten years his senior and married, she was, by all accounts, a brilliant and fascinating woman, but completely immoral. From the beginning of their relationship, when love was all promise and possibility, to its end, when love was only betrayal and bitterness, Catullus pours out his most profound personal feelings toward her in his poems. They are a constant challenge to translators trying to capture in other tongues the directness and freshness of his language and the wit and polish of his style. While other poets may have written about love in a less subjective way and in a more light-hearted manner, Catullus spoke with an intensity that made love completely serious and passion completely sincere. He remains the most personal poet of antiquity.

His only contemporary of the first rank was Lucretius (c. 99-c. 55 B.C.), a poet and philosopher of aristocratic family. His literary fame rests on his single surviving work, the long didactic poem *De Rerum Nature (On the Nature of Things)*, which was an important influence in spreading the Epicurean ideology of an earlier time (see PHILOSOPHY). Lucretius held that all things, including life and the complexities of the human experience, are the product of material atoms moving in infinite space. "The atoms of their own accord/ Jostled from time to time by chance/ In random fashion, clashed, and blindly, heedlessly/ And oft in vain" until finally they united to form air, fire, earth, water, and living things. Thus all is accident and without purpose. In such a universe there are no gods, no eternal souls, and so humankind is free from the fear of the gods, of death and punishment, and free to enjoy its mortality. For Lucretius, the wonder of this world lay in the realization of human potential and in the infinite possibilities of human achievement. *De Rerum* is a philosophical statement rarely matched in its majesty of theme, acuteness and vividness of expression, and beauty of poetic cadence.

While Lucretius turned to the Greek past for his ideology, Vergil turned to an even more distant time in Greek literature for his inspiration. Vergil was the epic poet who most closely--almost slavishly--kept Homer alive. Born in 70 B.C., he was a friend and protege of Augustus. When Vergil died in 19 B.C., Augustus would not permit the destruction of his unfinished epic, the *Aeneid*. An epic for the greater glory of

Rome, the *Aeneid* was designed to raise Roman achievement to the level of the heroic age of Greece. It tells the story of Aeneas, a Trojan hero, who leaves Troy with his ancient father and young son, Ascanius, and a small band of Trojan survivors, and eventually founds a new world of heroic proportions on the shores of western Italy. Like Odysseus, Aeneas encounters impossible odds, strange adventures, amatory encounters--especially with the queen of Carthage, the incomparable Dido--and after much personal heroism finally wins his destined place. His mother, Aphrodite (the Latin Venus) is his protector; the gods take sides, just as they did in Homer's epics, and Aeneas obeys their whims and commands. The *Aeneid* is clearly a reflection of an exalted idealism that probably never was embraced by any actual Roman hero; nevertheless, it appealed to its age and has survived better than any other Roman work because of its magnificence as a poem. (Students brave enough to read the whole epic in Latin never forget it.)

Vergil's contemporary, Horace (65-8 B.C.), achieved another kind of distinction: the brief lyric reflecting the Roman idealism of the Golden Mean--nothing too much, everything in balance. His verse is impeccable, almost untranslatable, yet admirers have tried in every age to emulate him. In 42 B.C., two years after the death of Julius Caesar, Horace left his university studies at Athens to join the army of Brutus and Cassius against Augustus and Antony. Though this was an impolitic venture for a young poet who would need the patronage of the rulers, Horace eventually became one of the greatest Augustan poets--chiefly by avoiding politics thereafter. He does not attempt the psychological probing of Catullus nor the epic grandeur of Vergil, but his highly polished verse is still the model of technical achievement in Latin poetry. He does not approach any profound matters; he is amused by the difficulties of his friends with their mistresses; he writes paeans to lovely nature. His satire is mild, but expressed with absolute balance between the general and the particular.

Unlike the poetry of Vergil and Horace, which seems rather studied, Ovid's verses read without effort or strain. The most facile and prolific of the Augustan poets, Ovid (43 B.C.-A.D. 18) was the supreme entertainer of his age. Brilliantly skillful, often frivolous or bawdy, he retold popular stories and turned his own illicit affairs into ribald, erotic verse. One of his earlier cycles, the *Amores*, is typical of his frivolity and simultaneous sophistication. He was not a passionate Catullus; he looked upon love coolly and objectively, with practiced understanding of the psychology of women. In the *Heroides*, Ovid provides imaginary letters from mythical heroines (such as Penelope and Dido) who suffered because of love.

Ovid's later admirers are legion, including both Chaucer and Shakespeare, who borrowed his stories. In the Middle Ages his *Ars amatoria* became the "new testament" for the courtly lovers. The *Ars amatoria,* or *Art of Love*, is literally a manual on seduction. (While Ovid's exile ten years later to Tomi on the Black Sea was ostensibly attributed to Augustus' disapproval of this work, Ovid himself hinted at another, undisclosed reason.) The successful practitioner of the art of love is further

aided by Ovid in his *Remedia amoris*, in which he provides "remedies"--ways of falling out of love, of getting rid of a mistress. As examples, he frankly describes his own affairs and intimate feelings.

Ovid's most extensive work, *Metamorphoses*, is an anthology of more than two hundred stories retold from Greek and Roman mythology and arranged according to four ages of mankind--gold, silver, bronze, and iron. As the title indicates, some change or transformation in shape occurs in each story, though in some the change is neglibile, merely a literary device to give form to the whole collection. Ovid characterized the main figures just as carefully and vividly as though the story itself were of enormous consequence. As always, his style is nicely adjusted to the subject matter. His poetry rolls with the fighting of Perseus and the battles of the Centaurs, and moves delicately in the tender story of Echo and Narcissus. Needless to say, the *Metamorphoses* was regularly mined for allusions by poets thereafter.

While the poetry of the succeeding age never equalled in beauty the poetry of the Augustans, it cast a strong and clear light on the tyranny and degeneracy of the time. The satirist Juvenal (A.D. 60-140) and the epigrammaticist Martial (A.D. 43-c. 104) presented a view of the Roman world that was not only pessimistic but prophetic. Juvenal is prejudiced, vitriolic, often violent, never patient with the vice and corruption of his world. His rage at the failure of idealism was expressed in sixteen satires (in five books), a most damning view of what Roman society had become under emperors whose bestiality had become legendary. Martial was more inclined to lighter commentary in his fifteen hundred short poems, describing with wit and facility the frauds and vices of the age. He was also capable of serious verse, but like Juvenal, his satiric purpose helped to give the impression of the late Roman world that we must accept as authentic.

Latin prose fiction emerges in the first century A.D. with the appearance of the novel *Satyricon* by Petronius. Of the author's life we know little. Evidently he committed suicide about A.D. 66, according to Tacitus' account. He was a "refined voluptuary" who served as governor of Bithynia, later as a Roman consul, then as an "arbiter of taste" for the emperor Nero's intimate circle. He was the victim of the jealousy of Tigellinus, prefect of Nero's personal army, the Praetorian Guard, who caused his arrest. Rather than submit to ignominy, Petronius deliberately cut his veins and bled to death quietly while his friends feasted.

The *Satyricon* reenforces our view of a society which could support--and destroy--such a man. Three homosexual friends are the main characters in a series of adventures, amatory and political, aesthetic and squalid, revealing a society so corrupt and debauched that no other age can compare with it. Though the underside--the wicked side--of Roman society is the scene, the morality is still implicit: Petronius, whatever his own predilections, was as much a satirist and moralist as his contemporaries Juvenal and Martial, and equally willing to condemn with brilliant irony. Unfortunately, the *Satyricon* survives in fragmentary form, flawed but magnificent.

The tone of disillusionment in Petronius' novel is also apparent in the work of Apuleius (c. A.D. 125 to late second century). Apuleius wrote several short treatises, but his most enduring work, the *Golden Ass*, is one of the finest early novels and a model of the frame tale with interspersed stories. Apuleius probably included many of his own personal experiences, but he also drew heavily on the folk tales and miraculous stories popular in his times. The "hero" is a young sophisticate named Lucius, who visits Hypata, famous as the home of witches and necromancers. Visiting an acquaintance, Lucius seduces a servant girl, Fotis (an easy conquest), then with her help, is transformed. He hoped to become an owl--like Fotis' mistress--but due to confusion of the potions, is transformed into an ass and is promptly stolen by robbers invading the house. During the next year the ass is subjected to numerous painful adventures and indignities, hears many fascinating tales, and is able to both observe and participate in several raunchy adventures. He is finally delivered by the goddess Isis (who prescribes eating fresh roses), is restored to human form, and becomes a lawyer and devotee of the goddess' cult. Now this is a mystery: when Lucius becomes a man again, he joins the "lodge," becomes a very conservative and wealthy citizen, and apparently loses his insight into human behavior. The meagre facts about Apuleius' life suggest that he is giving a more or less accurate account of his own attitudes, yet his perceptions revealed through Lucius--the ass--are far more profound and wise than those of the restored sophisticate who was making the most of a depraved world.

The historians, essayists, and philosophers of Latin prose are a most amazing gallery of literary genius, beginning with Caesar (100-44 B.C.), who wrote an account of his conquest of Gaul which is still a staple of Latin studies. Cicero (106-43 B.C.), the orator and philosopher, provides another dimension to the thought and literature of this time, one that has provided models for rhetoricians, grammarians, and Latin enthusiasts even from his own day. In the Augustan Age comes Livy's remarkable history of Rome. Originally consisting of 142 books (though only 35 have survived, others are known through references from later writers) and taking forty years to write, it traced the history of Rome from its legendary beginning to Livy's own time. In it the historian gives a glowing report of Rome's Golden Age. More realistic is Tacitus (c. A.D. 55-c. 115), who, a hundred years later, clearly and perceptively analyzes his own age, exposing the evils of the empire in his *Histories* and *Annals*.

One of the most important collections of writings in the period was written by a Greek from Boeotia. The *Parallel Lives* of famous Greeks and Romans was the work of Plutarch (c. A.D. 46-120), an ancestor of Apuleius. He wrote several philosophical and ethical works but is best known for these studies, which, though they reflect his own preoccupations, are our major source of information about the "men who made history" and caused the world to evolve. As a stylist, Plutarch has never been surpassed. His works have been repeatedly translated; in Sir Thomas North's English version, Shakespeare found the major substance for his "Roman" plays.

Some of the best thought of the Roman world is preserved in the *Meditations* (written in Greek) of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180). Though his sons and successors reverted to the opportunism and debauchery of the worst of the Roman emperors, his writings have given us a standard of philosophical rectitude that was admired for many centuries (see PHILOSOPHY). Most of these philosophical treatises are the province of specialists, but insofar as they reflect basically humane ideology, they are a vital part of the Western literary heritage.

The principles of Platonic philosophy were revived repeatedly during the Roman age, especially by the Neo-Platonist Plotinus (c. A.D. 204-270). He was born in Egypt and studied at Alexandria before becoming a teacher at Rome. Though his works were read and widely distributed during the Middle Ages, a definitive edition did not appear until the nineteenth century. Plotinus' war with the Stoics caused much controversy, but he was familiar with most of the works of philosophers attempting to reconcile Christian p hilosophy with that of the earlier pagan ages. (See PHILOSOPHY.)

The political affairs of the Roman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean were frequently troubled during the first and second centuries A.D. by dissident groups. One of the most historically significant was the revolt of the religious community of Hebrews against their Roman governor, King Herod of Judea (c. 73-74 B.C.), a bloody despot who was the reputed slayer of the infants of Bethlehem when Jesus was a child. His reign bifurcated the allegiance of the Judeans, eventually leading to the revolt led by Judas Maccabaeus (d. c. 160 B.C.). But in the intervening time, the new faith, Christianity, had begun its inexorable conquest of the minds and spirits of the peoples within and without the Roman circle of power. Paul of Tarsus--a Greek-speaking Jew (converted after a crisis of faith, perhaps induced by his guilt over the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr[1]) and a leader of the Hellenistic Jews who believed in the resurrection of Jesus, their redeemer--was not only an articulate spokesman for the new faith but also a propagator of Christianity throughout the Roman world.

The literary heritage of the Hebrews had been well-known to Jews but to no one else of influence until this time. Various books of the Old Testament were repeatedly re-edited and recopied, often altered to fit changes in political climate and current theology. The latest books were written in the second century B.C., and the canon (Greek *kanon*, "rule" or "norm") of the Old Testament was established by a rabbinical council in A.D. 90. The early Church soon adopted the Jewish scriptures but in the Greek version, the Septuagint, made in Alexandria from the third to the first century B.C., which included a number of other works (the Apocrypha).

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[1]A. Powell Davies, *The First Christian* (New York: New American Library, Mentor Books), pp. 29f.