



Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology)

Erich S. Gruen

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Few encounters in antiquity have had more profound consequences than that between Greek culture and Republican Rome. Focusing on the ruling elites of the middle and later Republic, for whom Hellenic literature, religion, and visual arts were at once intimidating and appealing, Erich S. Gruen offers a compelling account of the assimilation and adaptation of Greek culture by the Romans.

Gruen examines such key cultural developments in the history of Republican Rome as the adaptation of the legend of Troy to create a special place for Rome within Hellenic traditions and Cato's campaign to distinguish Roman cultural achievements by defining them in contrast to those of the Greeks. He describes the diverse purposes—civic, religious, and political—for which the Romans used Greek art, as well as the reshaping of Hellenic models to express a distinctively Roman character in historical reliefs, portraiture, and comic drama. The book treats a variety of means whereby the Greek legacy was molded to suit the living Roman tradition. Gruen shows that this complex process of cultural transformation served to sharpen the Romans' sense of their own values their national character, and their international image.

Demonstrating that the Roman response to Hellenism was far more subtle and dynamic than has generally been acknowledged, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* will be welcomed as an outstanding contribution by readers interested in ancient history, classical literature, and the history of art.

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