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The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia Translated
with Introduction by Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson, Hackett,
2008

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The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia

Translated with Introduction by Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson, Hackett, 2008

Reviewed by Tiberiu Popa

We may often find ourselves commenting on our or others' stoic attitude, without pausing to ponder what exactly that means. We might even read Marcus Aurelius' "Meditations" (apparently Bill Clinton's once favorite book) without taking the trouble to place it in the larger context of the history of Stoicism as a theoretical outlook and a practical philosophy. Anyone interested in learning about the revealing (and sometimes perplexing) interconnections of ethics, politics, natural philosophy and theology in Stoicism and implicitly about its chief concepts and tenets (assent, morally perfect action, self-sufficiency etc.) will find *The Stoics Reader* to be a most reliable guide. This collection is impressively substantial without, however, claiming to be exhaustive (Marcus Aurelius' "Meditations", for instance, is not included here). Brad Inwood and Lloyd P. Gerson have provided a selection of texts expertly translated from Greek and Latin and conveniently gathered in the three main sections of this excellent anthology: Logic and Theory of Knowledge, Physics, and Ethics. The translations are largely based on the relevant segments of *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, a more comprehensive anthology previously produced by the same scholars. Besides emphasizing the influence Stoicism held in the Greek world and then in Roman culture, the two translators of these texts also remind us in their brief introduction that the Stoic doctrine, despite its old-fashioned anthropocentric cosmology, still invites reflection on the meaning of happiness and on how the self relates to nature, as well as on free will and moral responsibility, among so many other objects of inquiry that we still deem of virtually vital interest today.

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