



Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America (History, Languages, and Cultures of the Spanish and Portuguese Worlds)

David Andrew Lupher

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Romans in a New World shows how the ancient Romans haunted the Spanish conquest of the New World, more often than not as passionately rejected models. While the conquistadors themselves and their publicists challenged the reputations of the Romans for incomparable military genius and daring, Spanish critics of the conquest launched a concerted assault upon two other prominent uses of ancient Rome as a model: as an exemplar of imperialistic motives and behavior fit for Christians to follow, and as a yardstick against which to measure the cultural level of the natives of the New World.

In the course of this debate, many Spaniards were inspired to think more deeply on their own ethnic ancestry and identity, as Spanish treatment of the New World natives awakened the slumbering memory of Roman treatment of the Iberian tribes whom modern Spaniards were now embracing as their truest ancestors. At the same time, growing awareness of the cultural practices--especially the religious rituals--of the American natives framed a new perspective on both the pre-Christian ancestors of modern Europeans and even on the survival of "pagan" customs among modern Europeans themselves. In this incisive study, David A. Lupher addresses the increasingly debated question of the impact the discovery of the New World had upon Europeans' perceptions of their identity and place in history.

Romans in a New World holds much to interest both classicists and students of the history and culture of early modern Europe--especially, though not exclusively, historians of Spain. David A. Lupher's concern with the ideology of imperialism and colonization and with cross-cultural negotiations will be useful to students of cultural studies, as well.

David A. Lupher is Professor of Classics, University of Puget Sound.

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