



Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700 (Ideas in Context)

Dmitri Levitin

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Seventeenth-century England has long been heralded as the birthplace of a so-called 'new' philosophy. Yet what contemporaries might have understood by 'old' philosophy has been little appreciated. In this book Dmitri Levitin examines English attitudes to ancient philosophy in unprecedented depth, demonstrating the centrality of engagement with the history of philosophy to almost all educated persons, whether scholars, clerics, or philosophers themselves, and aligning English intellectual culture closely to that of continental Europe. Drawing on a vast array of sources, Levitin challenges the assumption that interest in ancient ideas was limited to out-of-date 'ancients' or was in some sense 'pre-enlightened'; indeed, much of the intellectual justification for the new philosophy came from re-writing its history. At the same time, the deep investment of English scholars in pioneering forms of late humanist erudition led them to develop some of the most innovative narratives of ancient philosophy in early modern Europe.

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