

FROM AUGUSTUS TO NERO

This book presents a narrative of the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors, namely Augustus to Nero, with passages in original Latin from Tacitus, Suetonius and Seneca. Their works portray a dark world of murder and debauchery: Augustus with his firm moral policies and adulterous affairs; the depraved Tiberius; the extravagance and madness of Caligula; the ineffective Claudius; and Nero, with his artistic pretensions. The selections are invaluable on an artistic and cultural level, promoting the study of style and rhetoric and exploring human nature, the roles of women and imperialism. This book is essential reading for those students who, having completed an introductory Latin course, are ready to tackle genuine, unsimplified Latin prose. With a comprehensive introduction, detailed notes and an appreciation of each writer which addresses questions of context, analysis and literary criticism, this book will enhance students' understanding and enjoyment of Latin prose.

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FROM AUGUSTUS TO NERO

An Intermediate Latin Reader



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P R E F A C E



This book is intended primarily as a Latin reader, not as a historical survey of the Julio-Claudian emperors (although readers will pick up much about them in the course of using it). Highlights from Tacitus, Suetonius and Seneca have been chosen which should prove interesting and variously affecting, so that students will want to read on and should actually enjoy translating (this explains why Augustus, who is not such a readily appealing figure in the ancient sources, receives less coverage than his successors). These highlights are also decidedly valuable on several levels – cultural (as a study of human nature, the roles of Roman women, imperialism, corruption, and so on), artistic (especially in the case of Tacitus, a master of style and rhetoric) and academic (as well as being a Latin reader, the book is obviously useful as a supplement to Roman history courses).

The selections are aimed at those who have completed an introductory Latin course and are at the stage of moving on to genuine, unsimplified Latin prose (difficult language has been omitted rather than emended, and the only changes are to names, to avoid confusion – e.g. Caesar is replaced with Tiberius or Germanicus, and so on). The Latin (especially Tacitus) is hard for intermediate students, and we are keen to reach the needs of as wide an audience as possible, so cuts have been made not only within passages but also within sentences (particularly in the earlier selections). In view of this target readership, lots of help is given in the Notes at the start. Later, it is gradually reduced (especially in the Claudius and Nero sections), and students are encouraged to think for themselves more and more. The Notes are mainly intended to assist with basic comprehension (but do also contain some remarks on style and expression), while the Appreciation consists largely of historical comment and literary criticism (to deepen students' perception). For students who need to brush up on the basics, at the end of the Notes on each passage there are initially suggestions for reviewing declensions and conjugations and also the more important constructions (as encountered in the particular passage). The references are

to pages in Morwood (abbreviated as: M) and Wheelock (abbreviated as: W) and to sections in the reference grammar at the end of Jones–Sidwell (abbreviated as: RLRG). Those who used a different introductory Latin course should consult the appropriate parts of that for their reviewing.

GGF (the historian) supplied almost all of the Introduction, and the historical background in the Appreciation. PM (the literary critic) conceived the book, made the selections, put together the Notes and Vocabulary, and produced the close readings of the actual passages themselves in the Appreciation. Both would like to thank: two McMaster University graduate students (Lynne White and Audrey McSherry) for valuable help with the bibliographical references; McMaster’s Latin 2AA3 classes in 2000 and 2001 (who were taught by PM using a first draft of this book); Dr John Yardley and Dr Evan Haley, who very kindly scrutinized the first draft and suggested various improvements; and at CUP, Dr Michael Sharp for all his support, the anonymous readers for lots of helpful criticism, and Nina Palmer for crucially meticulous copy-editing.

GGF, PM.