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Culture and Identity

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*Greece & Rome*

NEW SURVEYS IN THE CLASSICS No. 39



ROMAN LANDSCAPE:  
CULTURE AND  
IDENTITY

BY  
DIANA SPENCER

*Published for the Classical Association*  
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Cover illustration: Claude (Gellée) Lorrain, *Coast Scene with Aeneas and the Cumaean Sibyl* (illustrating Verg. *Aen* 6.260–3). From the *Liber Veritatis*, 1673. Pen and brown ink and grey wash, with brown wash, heightened with white, on blue paper. In the foreground, we see two figures (Aeneas and the Sibyl) walking towards a cave; the background scenery completes the story – Lake Avernus (the Underworld: to come) and the Bay (Baiae: recalling Aeneas' recent landfall).

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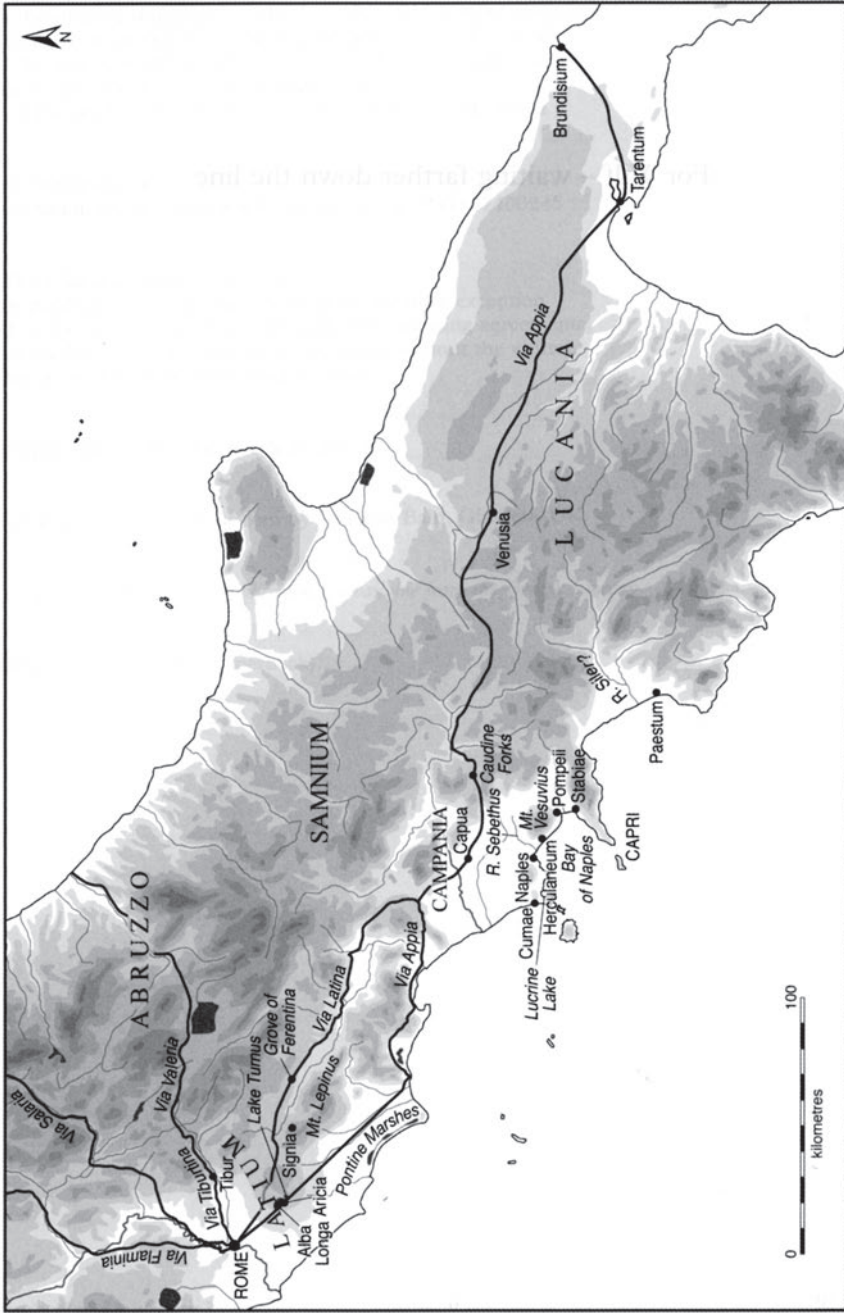
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For Wilf – waiting farther down the line



**Figure 1** Italy: Rome and the south.

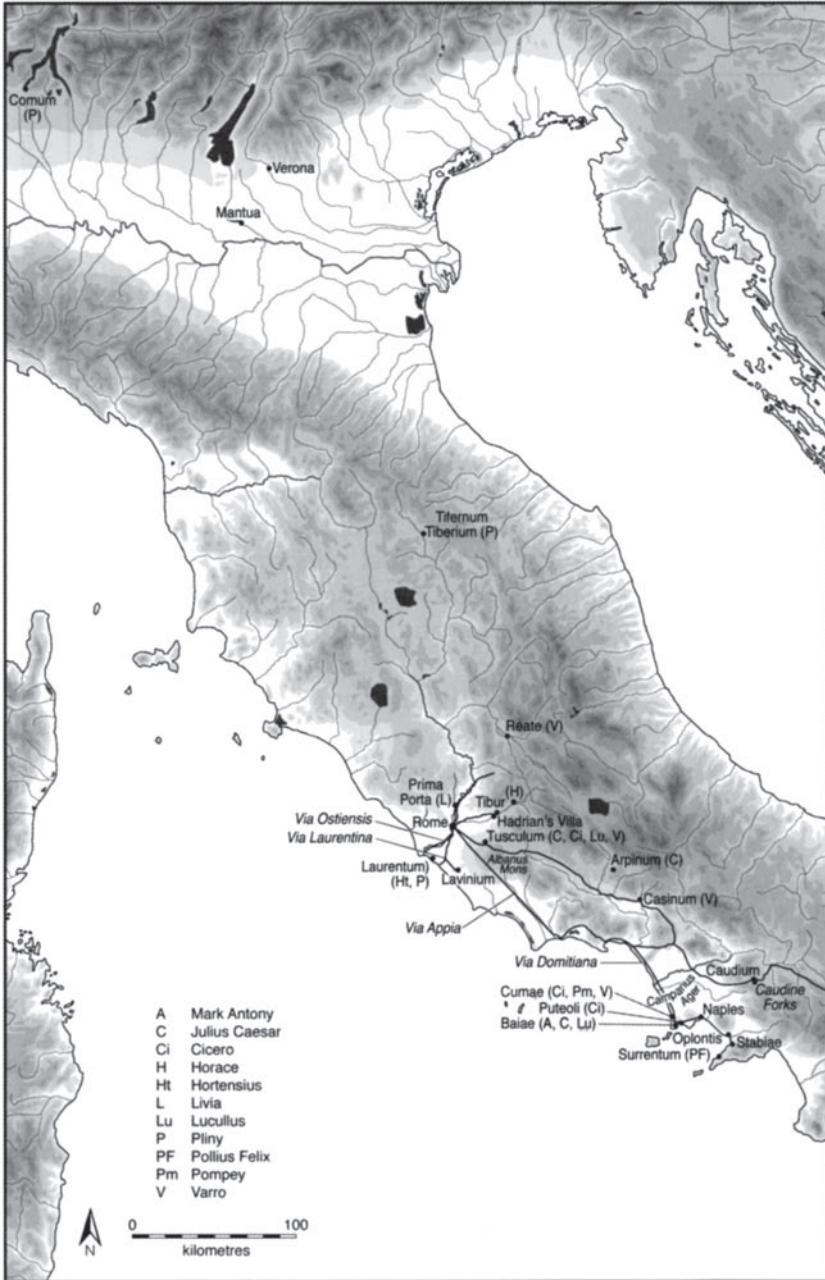
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**Figure 2** Italy: Rome and the north (key indicates likely sites of villas).

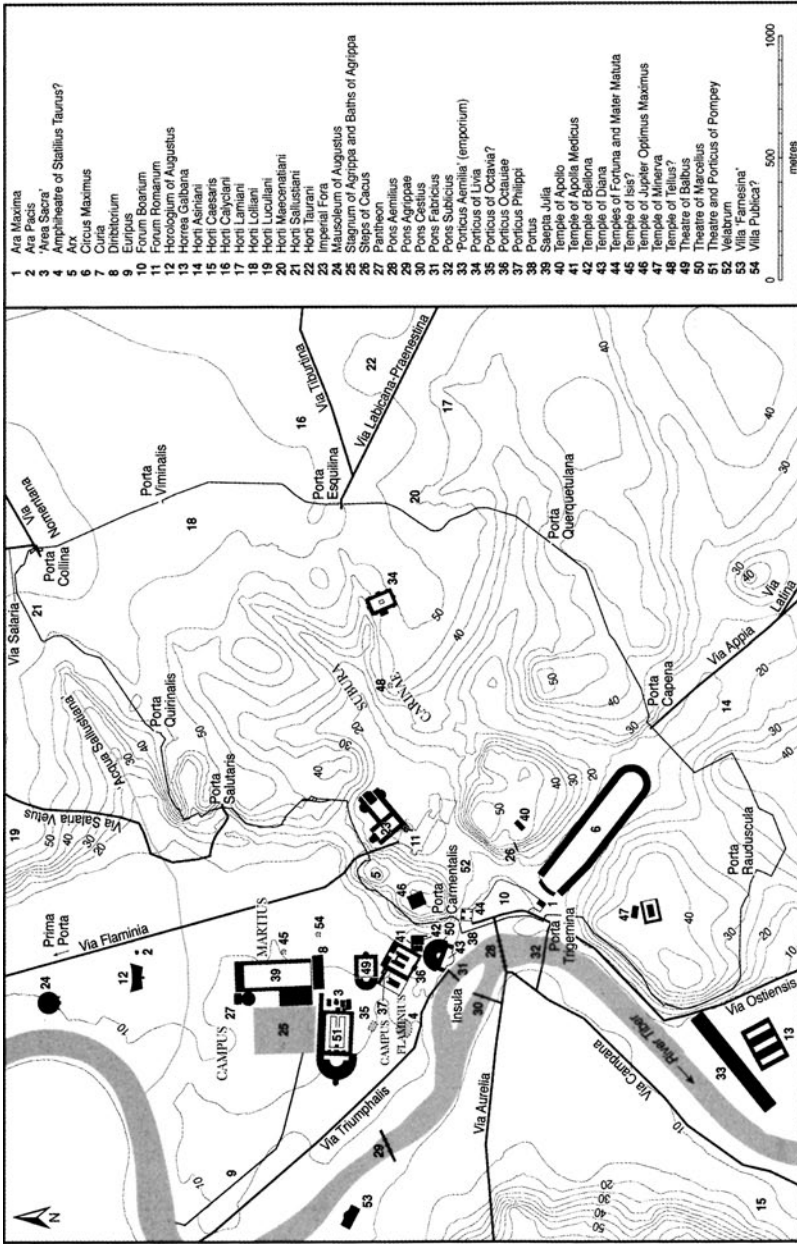


Figure 3 Augustan Rome (here and in Figure 5 the contour lines draw on Haselberger, Romano, and Dumser 2002).



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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ANRW* Temporini, H. and Haase, W. (eds.) 1972–. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.
- LTUR* Steinby, E. M. (ed.) 1993–2000. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* I–VI. Rome, Laterza.
- OLD* Glare, P. G. W. (ed.) 1982. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Journal abbreviations follow the scheme in *l'Année Philologique*

## PREFACE: KEY TERMS

This is a set of terms that recur in the main text (shown in bold at first use) and it makes a useful toolkit when studying landscape – it should be read through before proceeding to Chapter I. The chapter of first use in the main text is indicated after each entry. Bold terms in the text cross-reference head-word entries.

**aesthetic(s)** – relating to sensuous perception; an approach to studying the nature of beauty (*Chapter I*).

**anthropomorphic** – like a human in shape, behaviour, motivation, or other characteristics (*Chapter II*).

**autarky** – self-sufficiency; the ability to rely on one's own resources; by implication, self-control (*Chapter II*).

**autochthonic** – indigenous; aboriginal; native to a land or region (*Chapter I*).

**axial line** – direct or unimpeded line between two points in three-dimensional space, and the associated visual field; important for studying **space syntax** (*Chapter IV*).

**chronotope** – a literary critical term designating the complementary and culture-specific relationship between time and space that gives meaning to narrative and plot; made famous by Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1930s (*Chapter IV*).

**code-switching** – using more than one communication code (e.g. language, grammar) within a conversation or other form of **discourse**; important in sociolinguistics and translation studies (*Chapter V*).

**cognitive linguistics** – a branch of study that developed in the 1970s, and that examines the organizational principles of language with special emphasis on the relationship between linguistic structure (e.g. syntax, morphology), meaning, and use (*Chapter I*).

**deictic** – specification of a shared cognitive field relative to space, time, and context; implies taking into account the points of view of both the speaker (or author) and the audience (*Chapter IV*).

**dialectic** – using logical discussion to examine the nature of truth, or a practice, or an opinion (*Chapter V*).

**discourse** – employed by post-structuralism to mean language (written, spoken, or visual) or a system of ideas in use within a particular set of contexts (historical, social, and ideological) (*Chapter I*).

**ekphrasis** – the literary description of a work of art (*Chapter III*).

**entropy** – a measure of randomness in a system; the tendency of systems to move from the less probable (order) towards the more probable (disorder) (*Chapter II*).

**episteme** – an idea-set of beliefs, categories, and assumptions comprising or dominating knowledge or understanding (of a subject) at a given time (*Chapter I*).

**epistemology** – a philosophical approach to defining what knowledge is; analysis of the nature of knowledge and how it is defined; hence **episteme** (*Chapter I*).

- ethnography** – the (comparative) description of particular human societies (typically, communities or nations); hence ‘ethnographic’ (*Chapter III*).
- ethnology** – the (comparative) study of particular human societies (typically, communities or nations); hence ‘ethnological’ (*Chapter I*).
- ethnoscape** – a space given shared meaning as a territory by a community; a space that a group, defining itself ethnically, sees as providing a shared frame of reference and point of origin (*Chapter I*).
- fat (convex) space** – **semiotically** dense, taking significant conceptual effort to move through because of, for example, unfamiliarity (taking an unknown route from *a* to *b* appears to take longer than a return trip from *b* to *a* that traces the same route); complex **isovists** (perhaps including signage requiring interpretation, visually rich buildings, or monuments); or the appearance of interim destinations or blocked routes (**axial lines**) requiring decision-making; key term in **space syntax** (*Chapter I*).
- focalization** – in narrative theory, this is typically the presentation of a scene through the perception of one character or persona, or from a particular point of view; hence ‘focalize’ (*Chapter I*).
- the Gaze** – from psychoanalytic theory (developed by Jacques Lacan), and also important in post-colonial criticism, this defines what happens when we recognize an ideal self in an external object (e.g. in a mirror, in a movie), and become aware that what we see appears to look back at us (or configure how we look at it). Hence we realize that, even when we think that we define and control the external material world in our own terms, it inevitably exercises control over us and our responses. See also **voyant-visible** (*Chapter I*).
- hegemony** – leadership or dominance imposed by one group within a community or federation; hence ‘hegemonic’ (*Chapter V*).
- hermeneutic(s)** – (drawing meaning from) the study of (the process of) interpretation (*Chapter I*).
- hyperreal(ity)** – as used in postmodernism, signifies an object or site that creates a vivid illusion of authentic reality; the illusion is flawed only because the effect is too good to be true; for example, it totally fulfils one particular audience’s expectations of what ‘reality’ ought to be, to the exclusion of other perspectives; typically discussed in terms of the **simulacrum**; see Eco 1986 (*Chapter V*).
- iconography** – a set of recognizable images or symbols associated with a particular subject or person; hence ‘iconographic’ (*Chapter I*).
- ideology** – a complex of ideas or a conceptual scheme reflecting and/or serving the needs of an individual or group; an acculturated belief-system by which an individual/group makes sense of the world; hence ‘ideologically’ (*Chapter III*).
- interdisciplinary** – looking at the connections linking different fields of study and applying critical methods and approaches from a range of disciplines (*Chapter I*).
- intratextuality** – approaching a **text** as a segmented unit composed of parts, prioritizing the interest and autonomy of those parts, and exploring how the parts do or do not relate to each other (and the whole); hence, ‘intratextual(ly)’ (*Chapter II*).
- isovist** – entire visual field accessible from a specified point in space (significant for studying **space syntax**) (*Chapter IV*).
- labor** – Latin term – physical toil (*Chapter I*).



- lieux de mémoire** – ethnographically qualified zones saturated with shared (typically historical) meanings that define a group, culture, or people; made famous by Pierre Nora; variously translated as ‘sites’ or ‘realms’ of memory (*Chapter I*).
- locus amoenus** – Latin term – a trope signifying a charming, pleasant, and delightful place; a highly wrought scenographic franchise (*Chapter I*).
- mime** – a persistent idea or cultural practice transmitted across a civilization or population (e.g. urban legends, catchphrases, trends) (*Chapter II*).
- methodology** – a group of critical approaches used in a particular field; implies consideration of the suitability and implications of the choice of particular methods of study or analysis (*Chapter I*).
- mnemotechnic(s)** – (the process of) structuring memory using patterns of ideas or associations in order to aid recall (*Chapter V*).
- narratology** – the theory and analysis of how stories are told (structure, narration, stylistic features, etc.) and how this affects the way in which they are perceived and understood (*Chapter IV*).
- natura** – Latin term – (the power that determines) the way things inherently are; (what directs natural processes in) the physical world (*Chapter I*).
- negotium** – Latin term – etymologically, a combination of the negative *nec* and *otium*, therefore an activity that, by contrast, is ‘not leisure’; it typically refers to business undertakings (*Chapter I*).
- nexus** – a network, or a point of convergence (*Chapter I*).
- ontological** – relating to ontology, which is the study of the nature of existence or reality (*Chapter IV*).
- otium** – Latin term – semiotically complex, denoting both productive and wasteful leisure (*Chapter I*).
- palimpsest** – a reused writing surface from which earlier writing has been incompletely erased and so remains visible; in critical theory, a place, object, or entity with more than one available layer of meaning, or where earlier patterns or arrangements continue to show through the most recent layer (*Chapter V*).
- phenomenology** – theoretical approach prioritizing the analysis of subjective (or first-person) experience, typically of an ‘object’ or phenomenon; hence ‘phenomenological’ (*Chapter I*).
- praxis** – practice developed from a theory or informed by a particular cultural context; sometimes denotes speech as action (*Chapter III*).
- prosopopoeia** – (literally) putting on a mask and speaking as if someone else; orators loved this dramatic effect, which put all the great men of history at their disposal (*Chapter V*).
- scenography** – the construction, representation, and description of (often performative) space; typically implies a theorized or critically alert approach to the qualities of perspective and point of view; compare *skenographia* – ancient theatrical set-design or scenery (*Chapter I*).
- scopophilia** – deriving (sexual) pleasure from looking at something or someone; voyeurism; frequently, the (male) Gaze as a means of objectification; hence ‘scopophilic’ (*Chapter V*).
- self-fashioning** – designing a persona (or image) for oneself that fits in with a set of social norms (see Greenblatt 1980) (*Chapter I*).
- semiotic(s)** – the interpretation of signs and symbols (see Barthes 1967) (*Chapter I*).

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- simulacrum** – in philosophy, something which gives the appearance of reproducing a real entity but is in fact not related to or dependent upon any original external model; associated with postmodernism’s **hyperreal**; see Webography: Oberly (*Chapter III*).
- somatic** – relating to the body as an entity defined by a dialogue between biological factors, environment, and perception (*Chapter II*).
- space syntax** – a theoretical approach for defining and analysing space systematically by seeing how and where a space’s **axial lines** intersect, and how the resulting zones reflect and establish patterns of human use and interaction (*Chapter I*).
- subaltern** – a socio-culturally subordinate group of people, discourse, or point of view (*Chapter III*).
- syncretism** – the harmonization, reconciliation, or fusing of diverse ideas and practices (*Chapter II*).
- taxonomy** – the practice and science of classification into ordered and often relational groups or categories (*Chapter II*).
- teleology** – in philosophy, an interpretive system that explains events in terms of purpose and causation; often used to explore the idea of progress in the study of history, where it denotes purposeful linear momentum towards a set goal (*Chapter IV*).
- text** – an item of cultural production (often, but not necessarily, written) which is susceptible to critical analysis (*Chapter I*).
- trope** – a motif or recurrent theme, often involving figurative language; traditionally, a turn of phrase using words non-literally (e.g. metaphor) (*Chapter I*).
- voyant-visible** – simultaneously seeing and being the object of sight (coined by Merleau-Ponty, and connected to **the Gaze**; see also Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle – the observer affects the observed) (*Chapter II*).
- way-finding** – the process whereby an individual or group recognizes and imposes meaningful patterns on their surroundings in order to navigate their environment (see Lynch 1960) (*Chapter IV*).