

A HISTORY OF LATIN LITERATURE FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE AGE OF AUGUSTUS

Latin literature exploded onto the scene from relatively humble beginnings in the third century BCE. In an astonishingly short time the Romans adopted and adapted nearly all the genres of literature known to them; not only were they well aware of their large-scale appropriation but even, curiously, boasted of it. This readable new history of Latin literature covers the full span of the Roman republic, concluding with the age of Augustus, whose great poets engaged with the enormous political and cultural changes of their time and laid the foundations for the literature of the Imperial period. All the major writers are covered but attention is also paid to more fragmentary but still key authors such as Ennius, Cato, Lucilius, and Varro. Readers are given the essential historical, cultural, and literary background as well as close readings of specific passages, which reveal the charm and complexity which animate Latin literature.

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Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>Chronology</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xii
<i>List of Sidebars</i>	xviii
<i>Maps</i>	xix
Introduction	i
1 Romanised Muses: The Birth of Latin Literature	6
2 All the World’s a Stage: Roman Republican Drama and Theatrical Traditions	41
3 A Good Man Skilled in Speaking: Oratory and Rhetoric in Rome	75
4 Song of Myself: The Personal Voice in Republican Literature	110
5 To Educate and to Entertain: Didactic and the Arrangement of Knowledge	148
6 What’s Past Is Prologue: History and Biography	198
7 Moments of Glad Grace: Augustan Love Poetry	244
8 Gods, Monsters, and Heroes: Augustan Epic	274
9 Further Voices: Augustan Personal Poetry	317
Coda	355

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Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
	<i>Glossary of Names and Terms</i>	359
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	363
	<i>Index Nominum</i>	372
	<i>General Index</i>	380

Maps

1	Italy and Sicily. A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Oglvie (eds.), <i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> , vol. 8 (Cambridge 1990), p. 479.	page xix
2	The Roman world in 50 BCE. A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Oglvie (eds.), <i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> , vol. 8 (Cambridge 1990), p. 479.	xx
3	The city of Rome during the republic. R. Morstein-Marx, <i>Oratory and Political Power in the Late Republic</i> (Cambridge 2004), p. 43.	xxi

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Chronology

The dates assigned to some literary works are provisional.

BCE

1184/3	The fall of Troy according to most Hellenistic scholars (and the date commonly accepted by Romans).
753	The founding of Rome according to Livy (other dates were advocated by distinguished figures: e.g. 754, 751, 750, 747, 728).
280–275	War with Pyrrhus of Epirus (the Pyrrhic War); the wider Greek world takes notice of Rome.
264–241	War with Carthage (First Punic War); Rome acquires overseas possessions.
240	Livius Andronicus and the origins of Latin literature; death of Callimachus
218–201	War with Carthage (Second Punic War, also known as the Hannibalic War); Rome becomes the major power in the western Mediterranean.
204	death of Naevius
184	death of Plautus
169	death of Ennius
168	Victory over Macedon (Third Macedonian War); Rome dismantles the kingdom of Macedon and is recognised as the sole superpower in the Mediterranean.
166–160	the comedies of Terence
159	death of Terence
149	death of Cato the Elder
149–146	War with Carthage (Third Punic War); destruction of Carthage.
106	Marius is victorious in the war against Jugurtha (Jugurthine War); birth of Cicero.

103	death of Lucilius
101	Marius is victorious in the war against the Cimbri (Cimbrian War).
100	birth of Caesar
91–87	Social War
88	Sulla marches on Rome; civil war.
87	Marius returns to Rome; civil war.
86	death of Marius
83	Sulla returns to Rome: civil war; proscriptions.
82–81	dictatorship of Sulla
79	death of Sulla
70	birth of Vergil
65	birth of Horace
63	consulship of Cicero
late 60s	through mid 50s the poetry of Catullus and Lucretius
58–50	Caesar's war against the Gauls; increasing political disruption in Rome
49–44	civil war between Caesar and Pompey (and, after Pompey's death, Pompey's allies, including his son Sextus Pompey, fight on).
49–44	Caesar's autocracy, expressed in multiple dictatorships
44	death of Caesar
43	formation of the triumvirate (Mark Antony, Lepidus, Octavian); proscriptions; death of Cicero
42	Civil war between the triumvirs and the assassins of Caesar (Horace fights on the side of the assassins); dispossession of landholders in Italy; blockade of Rome by Sextus Pompey.
41–40	The Perusine War (civil war pitting Octavian and Lepidus against Antony's brother and wife, who claimed to champion the dispossessed).
40	consulship of Asinius Pollio: Vergil's <i>Fourth Eclogue</i>
38	Vergil's <i>Eclogues</i> appear
37–33	In this period, Horace's <i>Satires</i> (Book One) and Varro's <i>On Agriculture</i> appear.
36	Civil war: Octavian and Lepidus defeat Sextus Pompey; Lepidus is removed from the triumvirate.
35	death of Sallust
31	battle of Actium; Octavian defeats Antony and Cleopatra.
30	Octavian conquers Egypt: death of Antony and Cleopatra; Cornelius Gallus becomes governor of Egypt.

Chronology

xi

- 30 Horace's *Epodes* and *Satires* (Book Two) appear.
- 29 Vergil's *Georgics* and first book of Propertius' *Elegies* appear.
- 27 Octavian receives the name Augustus; death of Varro.
- 24–23 First three books of Horace's *Odes* appear; Vitruvius' *On Architecture* appears.
- 22 Propertius' *Elegies* (Books Two and Three) appear.
- 20 Horace's *Epistles* (Book One) and Ovid's *Amores* appear.
- 19 death of Vergil; death of Tibullus
- 18 Augustus' moral legislation
- 17 Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*
- 16 Propertius *Elegies* (Book Four) appears.
- 15 Ovid's *Heroides* appears.
- 14 likely death of Propertius
- 13 Horace's *Odes* (Book Four) and *Epistles* (Book Two) appear around this time.
- 8 death of Horace

CE

- 1 Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and *Remedia amoris* appear.
- 2 Ovid begins writing the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* at about this time.
- 7 Ovid relegated to Pontus, begins composing Book One of the *Tristia*.
- 9 Ovid's *Tristia* (Book Two) appears.
- 13 Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* appears.
- 14 death of Augustus
- 17 death of Livy; death of Ovid

Abbreviations

Accius fr.	The fragments of Accius in E. H. Warmington, <i>Remains of Old Latin: Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius, Accius</i> (Cambridge MA 1936).
<i>Ad Marcum filium</i> J	The fragments of Cato's <i>Ad Marcum filium</i> (<i>Letter to his Son</i>) in the edition of H. Jordon, <i>M. Catonis praeter librum de re rustica quae exstant</i> (Lepizig 1860).
Anacreon fr.	Fragments of Anacreon in D. A. Campbell, <i>Greek Lyric, Volume II: Anacreon, Anacreontea, Choral Lyric from Olympus to Alcman</i> (Cambridge MA 1988).
<i>Anth. Pal.</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i> (<i>The Palatine Anthology</i>).
App. <i>B. Civ.</i>	Appian, <i>The Civil War</i> .
Apul. <i>Apol.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Apologia</i> (<i>Apology</i>).
Arist. <i>Poet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> .
Asc.	Q. Asconius Pedianus, <i>Orationum Ciceronis quinque enarratio</i> (<i>Commentary on Five Speeches of Cicero</i>) in the edition by A. C. Clark, <i>Q. Asconii Pediani orationum Ciceronis quinque enarratio</i> (Oxford 1907).
Athen. <i>Deipn.</i>	Athenaeus, <i>Deipnosophistae</i> (<i>The Learned Banqueters</i>).
Caes. <i>B. Civ.</i>	Caesar, <i>Bellum Civile</i> (<i>The Civil War</i>).
Caes. <i>B. Gall.</i>	Caesar, <i>Bellum Gallicum</i> (<i>Gallic War</i>).
Call. <i>Aet.</i>	Callimachus, <i>Aetia</i> (<i>Causes</i>) in the edition of A. Harder, <i>Callimachus: Aetia</i> (Oxford 2012).
Cat.	Catullus.
Cato <i>Agr.</i>	Cato, <i>De agricultura</i> (<i>On Agriculture</i>).
Cic. <i>Acad.</i>	Cicero, <i>Academica</i> (<i>Academic Investigations</i>).

List of Abbreviations

xiii

Cic. <i>Att.</i>	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Atticum</i> (<i>Letters to Atticus</i>).
Cic. <i>Brut.</i>	Cicero, <i>Brutus</i> (<i>Brutus</i>).
Cic. <i>Cael.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Caelio</i> (<i>In Defence of Caelius</i>).
Cic. <i>Clu.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Cluentio</i> (<i>In Defence of Cluentius</i>).
Cic. <i>De orat.</i>	Cicero, <i>De oratore</i> (<i>On the Orator</i>).
Cic. <i>Dom.</i>	Cicero, <i>De domo</i> (<i>On his House</i>).
Cic. <i>Fam.</i>	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad familiares</i> (<i>Letters to Friends</i>).
Cic. <i>Fin.</i>	Cicero, <i>De finibus</i> (<i>On Moral Ends</i>).
Cic. <i>Inv.</i>	Cicero, <i>De inventione</i> (<i>On Invention</i>).
Cic. <i>Leg.</i>	Cicero, <i>De legibus</i> (<i>On Laws</i>).
Cic. <i>Mur.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Murena</i> (<i>In Defence of Murena</i>).
Cic. <i>Off.</i>	Cicero, <i>De officiis</i> (<i>On Duties</i>).
Cic. <i>Or.</i>	Cicero, <i>Orator</i> (<i>The Orator</i>).
Cic. <i>Phil.</i>	Cicero, <i>Philippicae</i> (<i>Philippics</i>).
Cic. <i>Pis.</i>	Cicero, <i>In Pisonem</i> (<i>Against Piso</i>).
Cic. <i>Rosc. Am.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Roscio Amerino</i> (<i>In Defence of Sextus Roscius of Ameria</i>).
Cic. <i>Sen.</i>	Cicero, <i>De senectute</i> (<i>On Old Age</i>).
Cic. <i>Sest.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Sestio</i> (<i>In Defence of Sestius</i>).
Cic. <i>Tusc.</i>	Cicero, <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i> (<i>Tusculan Disputations</i>).
Cic. <i>Verr.</i>	Cicero, <i>In Verrem</i> (<i>Prosecution of Verres</i>).
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin 1863–).
Dio	Cassius Dio, <i>Roman History</i> .
Diom. K	Diomedes Grammaticus in H. Keil, <i>Grammatici Latini</i> , 8 vols. (Leipzig 1857).
Dion. Hal. <i>Ant. Rom.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Roman Antiquities</i> .
Enn. <i>Ann.</i> Sk	The fragments of Ennius' <i>Annals</i> in the edition of O. Skutsch, <i>The Annals of Quintus Ennius</i> (Oxford 1985).
Enn. <i>Sat.</i>	The fragments of Ennius' <i>Satires</i> in the edition of S. M. Goldberg and G. Manuwald, <i>Ennius. Fragmentary Republican Latin, Volume II: Ennius, Dramatic Fragments. Minor Works</i> (Cambridge MA 2022).

xiv

*List of Abbreviations*Enn. *Epig.*

The fragments of Ennius' *Epigrams* in the edition of S. M. Goldberg and G. Manuwald, *Ennius. Fragmentary Republican Latin, Volume II: Ennius, Dramatic Fragments. Minor Works* (Cambridge MA 2022).

Epic. *Ep. Hdt.*Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*.Eur. *Bacch.*Euripides, *Bacchae* (*The Bacchantes*).

Festus L

Sex. Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatione* (*On the Meaning of Words*) in the edition of W. M. Lindsay, *Sexti Pompei Festi De verborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli epitome* (Leipzig 1913).

Fronto *Ad Ant. imp.*

Fronto, *Ad Antoninum imperatorem* (*Letter to Marcus Antoninus, Emperor*).

FRHist.

The Fragments of the Roman Historians in the edition by T. J. Cornell (Oxford 2013).

Gell. *NA*Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* (*Attic Nights*).Hes. *Op.*Hesiod, *Works and Days*.Hes. *Theog.*Hesiod, *Theogony*.

Hdt.

Herodotus, *History of the Persian Wars*.Hom. *Il.*Homer, *Iliad*.Hom. *Od.*Homer, *Odyssey*.Hor. *Ars P.*Horace, *Ars Poetica* (*The Art of Poetry*).Hor. *Carm.*Horace, *Carmina* (*Odes*).Hor. *Epist.*Horace, *Epistulae* (*Epistles*).Hor. *Epod.*Horace, *Epodi* (*Epodes*).Hor. *Sat.*Horace, *Saturae* or *Sermones* (*Satires*).Hirt. *ap. Caes. B. Civ.*

This abbreviation refers to the parts of *Caes. B. Gall.* which were written by Aulus Hirtius (cos. 43).

ILS

H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 2nd ed. (Berlin 1954).

Inv. in Sall.

Invectiva in Sallustium (*Invective against Sallust*), an anonymous work.

Juv.

Juvenal.

Liv.

Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* (*History of Rome from the Founding of the City*).

Liv. *Per.*Livy, *Periochae* (*Summaries*).Liv. *praef.*Livy, *Praefatio* (*Preface*).

List of Abbreviations

xv

Luc. <i>Sat.</i>	Fragments of Lucilius' <i>Satires</i> in E. H. Warmington, <i>Remains of Old Latin, Volume III: Lucilius. The Twelve Tables</i> (Harvard 1938).
Lucr.	Lucretius, <i>De Rerum Natura</i> (<i>On the Nature of Things</i>).
Macrob. <i>Sat.</i>	Macrobius, <i>Saturnalia</i> (<i>Saturnalia</i>).
Menander <i>DE fr.</i>	The fragments of Menander's <i>Dis Exapaton</i> in W. G. Arnot, <i>Menander: Aspis. Georgos. Dis Exapaton. Dyskalos. Encheiridion. Epitrepontes</i> (Cambridge MA 1979).
Naev. fr.	The fragments of Naevius' <i>Bellum Punicum</i> in E. H. Warmington, <i>Remains of Old Latin, Volume II: Livius Andronicus. Naevius. Pacuvius. Accius</i> (Cambridge MA 1936).
Nep. <i>Ages.</i>	Cornelius Nepos, <i>Life of Agesilaus</i> .
Nep. <i>Cato</i>	Cornelius Nepos, <i>Life of Cato</i> .
Nep. <i>Eum.</i>	Cornelius Nepos, <i>Life of Eumenes</i> .
Nep. pr.	Cornelius Nepos, <i>praefatio</i> (<i>Preface to Lives of the Great Generals of Foreign Nations</i>).
Nonius L	Nonius Marcellus, <i>De Compendiosa Doctrina</i> (<i>An Encyclopaedia of Learning</i>), in the edition of W. M. Lindsay, <i>Nonii Marcelli de compendiosa doctrina libros XX</i> (Leipzig 1903).
Ov. <i>Am.</i>	Ovid, <i>Amores</i> .
Ov. <i>Ars am.</i>	Ovid, <i>Ars amatoria</i> (<i>Art of Love</i>).
Ov. <i>Fast.</i>	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> (<i>The Fasti</i>).
Ov. <i>Her.</i>	Ovid, <i>Heroides</i> (<i>Heroines</i>).
Ov. <i>Met.</i>	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (<i>The Metamorphoses</i>).
Ov. <i>Pont.</i>	Ovid, <i>Epistulae ex Ponto</i> (<i>Letters from Pontus</i>).
Ov. <i>Tr.</i>	Ovid, <i>Tristia</i> (<i>Sad Songs</i>).
Pers.	Persius.
Petr. <i>Satyr.</i>	Petronius, <i>Satyrica</i> .
Pl. <i>Phdr.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> .
Plaut. <i>Bacch.</i>	Plautus, <i>Bacchides</i> (<i>The Two Bacchises</i>).
Plaut. <i>Cas.</i>	Plautus, <i>Casina</i> (<i>Casina</i>).
Plaut. <i>Men.</i>	Plautus, <i>Menaechmi</i> (<i>The Menaechmus Brothers</i>).
Plaut. <i>Rud.</i>	Plautus, <i>Rudens</i> (<i>The Rope</i>).
Plaut. <i>Trin.</i>	Plautus, <i>Trinummus</i> (<i>Three Coins</i>).
Plin. <i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i> (<i>Letters</i>).

xvi

List of Abbreviations

Plin. <i>NH</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Naturalis historia</i> (<i>Natural History</i>).
Plut. <i>Alex.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Alexander the Great</i> .
Plut. <i>Arat.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Aratus</i> .
Plut. <i>Caes.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Caesar</i> .
Plut. <i>Cat. Mai.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Cato the Elder</i> .
Plut. <i>Hann.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Hannibal</i> .
Plut. <i>Luc.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Lucullus</i> .
Plut. <i>Pomp.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Pompey the Great</i> .
Plut. <i>Pyrr.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Pyrrhus</i> .
Plut. <i>Rom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Romulus</i> .
Polyb.	Polybius, <i>Histories</i> .
Prop.	Propertius.
Pseudo-Asc. Stangl	Pseudo-Asconius' <i>Notes on the Cicero's Orations against Verres</i> in the edition of T. Stangl, <i>Ciceronis Oratorum Scholiastae</i> (Vienna 1912).
Quint.	Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i> (<i>The Orator's Education</i>).
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i> (<i>Art of Rhetoric Addressed to Herennius</i>).
Sall. <i>Cat.</i>	Sallust, <i>De Catilinae coniuratione</i> (<i>On the Catilinarian Conspiracy</i>).
Sall. <i>Iug.</i>	Sallust, <i>Bellum Iugurthinum</i> (<i>The Jugurthine War</i>).
Sappho fr.	The fragments of Sappho in D. A. Campbell, <i>Greek Lyric, vol. 1: Sappho and Alcaeus</i> (Cambridge MA 1982).
Schol. <i>ad Hor.</i>	<i>Commentary on Horace</i> , text in F. Hauthal, <i>Acronis et Porphyrii commentarii in Q. Horatium Flaccum</i> (Berlin 1864).
Sen. <i>Contr.</i>	Seneca the Elder, <i>Controversiae</i> (<i>Argumentative Speeches</i>).
Sen. <i>Ep.</i>	Seneca the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i> (<i>Epistles</i>).
Sen. <i>Suas.</i>	Seneca the Elder, <i>Suasoriae</i> (<i>Persuasive Speeches</i>).
Serv. Auctus	The larger commentary on the <i>Aeneid</i> by Servius the grammarian, available in the edition by G. Thilo and H. Hagen, <i>Servii</i>

List of Abbreviations

xvii

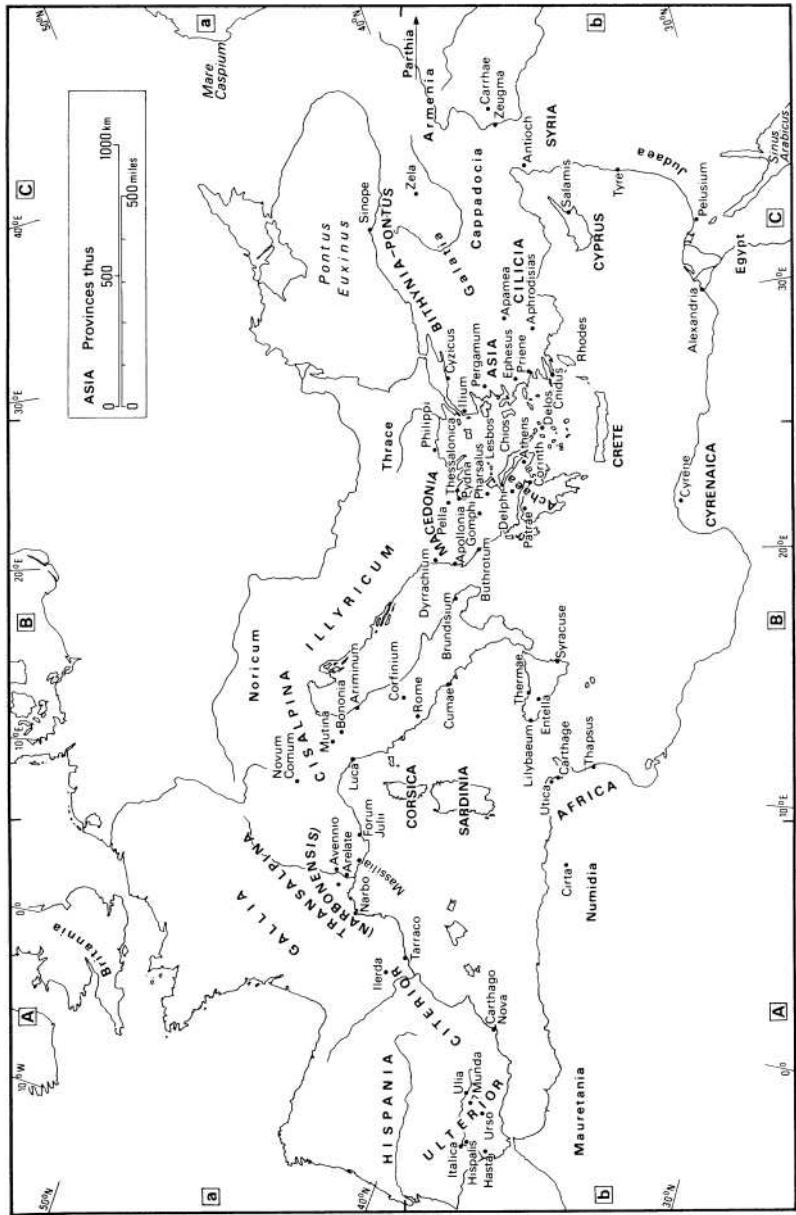
	<i>Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii</i> (Leipzig 1881–1902).
SHA <i>Hadr.</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae, <i>Hadrian</i> (<i>Life of Hadrian</i> in the <i>Augustan History</i>).
Stat. <i>Silv.</i>	Statius, <i>Silvae</i> (<i>Poems of the Woods</i>).
Suet. <i>Aug.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Augustus</i> (<i>Life of the Divine Augustus</i>).
Suet. <i>Gram.</i>	Suetonius, <i>De grammaticis</i> (<i>On Grammarians</i>).
Suet. <i>Iul.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Iulius</i> (<i>Life of the Divine Julius</i>).
Suet. <i>Vita Hor.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vita Horati</i> (<i>Life of Horace</i>).
Suet. <i>Vita Ter.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vita Terenti</i> (<i>Life of Terence</i>).
Suet. <i>Vita Verg.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vita Vergili</i> (<i>Life of Vergil</i>).
Tac. <i>Agr.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i> (<i>Life of Agricola</i>).
Tac. <i>Dial.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i> (<i>Dialogue on Oratory</i>).
Ter. <i>Ad.</i>	Terence, <i>Adelphoe</i> (<i>Brothers</i>).
Ter. <i>An.</i>	Terence, <i>Andria</i> (<i>The Girl from Andros</i>).
Ter. <i>Eun.</i>	Terence, <i>Eunuchus</i> (<i>The Eunuch</i>).
Ter. <i>Haut.</i>	Terence, <i>Heauton Timorumenos</i> (<i>The Self-Tormentor</i>).
Ter. <i>Phorm.</i>	Terence, <i>Phormio</i> (<i>Phormio</i>).
Thuc.	Thucydides, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> .
Tib.	Tibullus.
[Tib.]	This abbreviation refers to poems in the Tibullan collection which are <i>not</i> composed by Tibullus.
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus, <i>Facta et dicta memorabilia</i> (<i>Memorable Doings and Sayings</i>).
Varro <i>Rust.</i>	Varro, <i>De re rustica</i> (<i>On Agricultural Affairs</i>).
Vell.	Velleius Paterculus, <i>Historiae Romanae</i> (<i>Roman History</i>).
Verg. <i>Aen.</i>	Vergil, <i>Aeneid</i> .
Verg. <i>Ecl.</i>	Vergil, <i>Eclogues</i> .
Verg. <i>G.</i>	Vergil, <i>Georgics</i> .
Vitr. <i>De arch.</i>	Vitruvius, <i>De architectura</i> (<i>On Architecture</i>).

Sidebars

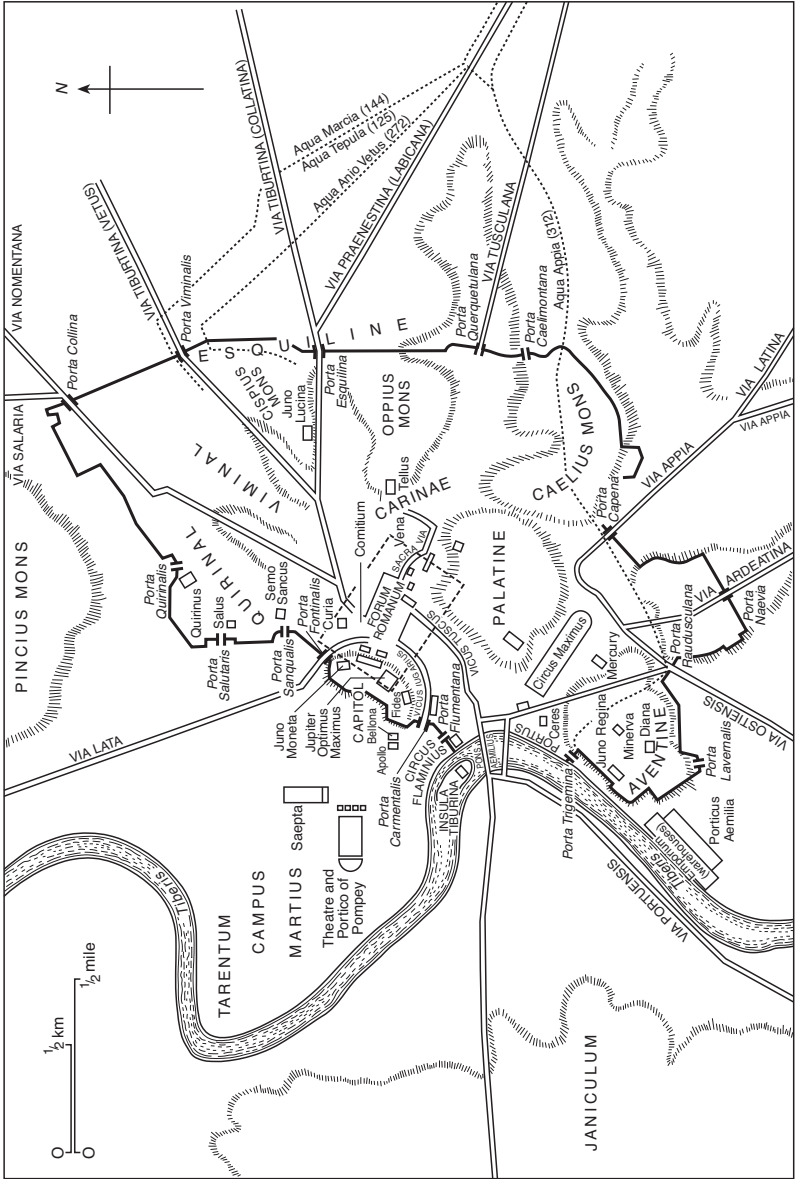
I	Naming Names: Roman Nomenclature	<i>page</i> 33
II	<i>Clientela</i> and Literary Patronage	34
III	The Metres of Latin Poetry	36
IV	Roman Slavery	70
V	Senators and Equestrians: The Roman Aristocracy	106
VI	Callimachus of Alexandria and the <i>Aetia</i>	144
VII	Men of Dedication: Cicero and Varro	193
VIII	The Right Stuff: Manliness, High Culture, and War	238
IX	Things Fall Apart: Social War and Civil War in the Late Republic	240
X	Roman Women	271
XI	The Trojan War and its Significance	312



Map 1 Italy and Sicily. A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8 (Cambridge 1990), p. 479.



Map 2 The Roman world in 50 BCE. A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8 (Cambridge 1990), p. 479.



Map 3 The city of Rome during the republic. R. Morstein-Marx, *Oratory and Political Power in the Late Republic* (Cambridge 2004), p. 43.