

Regionals Latin Literature Study Guide

(Lucius) **Livius Andronicus**: Considered the founder of Latin literature, he was a Greek from **Tarentum**, born c 284 B.C., who was brought to Rome as a slave; He **translated the Odyssey** of the Greek epic poet Homer **into Latin as poetry in Saturnian verse**. He also wrote *fabulae palliatae*, Latin comedies derived from Greek originals.

Gnaeus Naevius: The first native Roman writer of note, he was born c 270 B.C. He is best known for his *Bellum Punicum*, an epic poem on the **First Punic War in Saturnian verse**. He invented *fabulae praetextae*, dramas based on Roman subjects named for the garment. He also wrote *fabulae palliatae*.

Quintus Ennius: A writer of plays and poems, he was born **in Rudiae** in Calabria in 239 B.C. He knew three languages: **Latin, Oscan, and Greek and consequently said that he had three hearts**. He was revered by later Roman writers much more than Livius and Naevius. Ennius' most important work is *Annales*(Annals), an epic poem **18 books long in dactylic hexameter** verse which told Rome's story from the fall of Troy to Ennius' time. Ennius was **the first writer to adapt Greek hexameter verse into Latin**.

Titus Maccus (Maccius) **Plautus**: A comic playwright, born c 255 B.C.. Of some 130 plays written by Plautus, **20** are fully extant (surviving) and a large fragment of **one** more (*Vidularia*) also survives. Plautus derived his plays from those of Greek.

Amphitryon: concerns Jupiter's love for Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon

Aulularia(‘The Pot of Gold’):

Captivi(‘The Captives’): concerning a man Hegio searching for his lost sons, it has **no female characters**.

Epidicus: Plautus' favorite play,

Menaechmi(‘The Twin Menaechmi’): one of Plautus most successful comedies; in it two separated brothers discover each other and are reunited in Syracuse, the city of their births. The play is the model for Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*.

Miles Gloriosus(‘The Braggart Soldier’):

Mostellaria(‘The Haunted House’):

Poenulus(‘The Carthaginian’): contains the only extant passages of Carthaginian language; in the play Hanno prevents his daughters from being sold into prostitution.

Pseudolus: play in which the title character helps his master obtain enough money to free a courtesan named Phoenicium from Simo the procurer and a Macedonian officer who almost buys her.

Rudens(‘Rope’):

Marcus Porcius **Cato the Elder** (Censor): **born in Tusculum** in 234 B.C., he fought in the Second Punic War and is famous for ending all his speeches with “Carthago delenda est” (“Carthage must be destroyed”). He died in 149 B.C.

Cato was **Rome's first prose writer** and the **first to write Roman history in Latin**. He wrote *Origines*, a lost work **in seven books** dealing with the beginnings of Italian civilization and early Roman history. He also wrote *De Agri Cultura* (*De Re Rustica*), a

handbook on agriculture which declares cabbage to be an excellent and versatile crop. *De Agri Cultura* was the first (surviving) Latin prose work, while *Origines* was the first history written in Latin. The only name mentioned in *Origines* was the name of the lone elephant of Hannibal that survived the trek over the Alps.

Terence (Publius Terentius Afer): a comic playwright, **born in Carthage** c 195 B.C., he was taken to Rome as a slave by Terentius Lucanus, who educated and eventually freed Terence, who then took his benefactor's name. Terence became **friends with Scipio Aemilianus**, wrote **six plays**, all extant, and **died during a trip to Greece** in 159 B.C. His plays, **set in Athens**, are:

Andria ('The Woman of Andros'):

Hecyra ('The Mother-in-Law'):

Heauton Timorumenos ('The Self-Tormentor'):

Eunuchus ('The Eunuch'):

Phormio:

Adelphi ('The Brothers'):

Titus **Lucretius** Carus: Roman poet **born** c 99 B.C. **in Rome**, he **followed the Epicurean philosophy**. According to St. Jerome, **he took a love potion that made him insane and committed suicide** when 44 yrs old (in 55 B.C.). Lucretius' only surviving work is ***De Rerum Natura*** (On the Nature of Things), an unfinished didactic epic poem **addressed to his friend Gaius Memmius**, the governor of Bithynia. The poem is **six books long**.

Marcus Tullius **Cicero**: a Roman statesman and **the greatest Latin orator**; he was **born in Arpinum** (modern Arpino) **in 106 B.C.** There are fifty-eight extant orations by Cicero, and he wrote at least forty-eight others. The name Cicero means 'chickpea'. Cicero's earliest extant speech was ***Pro Quinctio***, delivered in 81 B.C. on behalf of Publius Quinctius in a dispute over Gallic land. Cicero argued against the famous orator **Hortensius**. Cicero's first political speech was ***Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino*** (80 B.C.), defending Sextus Roscius, who had been accused of **patricide**.

When Cicero **served as consul in 63 B.C.**, he exposed **Catiline's conspiracy** to take over the government in a series of speeches. *In Catilinam I* was delivered on November 8, followed by *In Catilinam II* the next day. The first speech forced Catiline to leave Rome for Faesulae, and the second one convinced the Senate to name Catiline a public enemy. *In Catilinam III* was given December 3, explaining how Cicero obtained the evidence presented against Catiline. *In Catilinam IV* (December 5), successfully convinced the Senate to **execute Catiline's co-conspirators**. With his defeat of Catiline, Cicero won the praise of the *optimates* (the highest class). Cato the Younger called Cicero the father of his country.

The **death of his daughter Tullia** in 45 B.C. stung Cicero severely, and his new wife's lack of compassion caused him to divorce her. After Caesar's death in 44 B.C., **Cicero vigorously opposed Mark Antony**, writing **fourteen *Philippics*** (named after Demosthenes' speeches against Philip of Macedon), the last one suggesting public celebration of Antony's defeat at Mutina, but Antony reconciled with his opponent Octavian and **executed Cicero at Formiae** in December 43 B.C.

Cicero's political and philosophical writings:

De Re Publica: a dialogue **in six books** on political philosophy begun in 54 B.C. and published three years later. The sixth book (**Somnium Scipionis**) was the only one known until more books were discovered.

Other works include: **De Natura Deorum**, giving the Epicurean, Stoic, and Academic conceptions of the gods, *De Divinatione* and *De Fato* are both sequels to it; **De Senectute** ("On Old Age") also called *Cato Major*, appropriately as Cato is the main speaker

Cicero also wrote letters, Cicero wrote poetry, which was respected in his own time, but later declined in reputation.

(Gaius Sallustius Crispus) **Sallust**: a historian, **born in 86 B.C.** It was in his retirement that Sallust wrote his works. His surviving works are:

Bellum Catilinae: a monograph discussing Catiline's conspiracy; critical of the aristocracy, but more critical of Catiline.

Bellum Jugurthinum, which praises Marius in his war against Numidia's King Jugurtha
Historiae: a fragmentary work covering **78 to 67 B.C.** Sallust died in 35 B.C.

Gaius Valerius **Catullus**: a lyric poet, **born in Verona c 84 B.C.** He went to Rome when about twenty-two years old. Catullus' father was a friend of Caesar, whom Catullus attacked in some of his poems, but Caesar forgave Catullus after the latter apologized. Catullus fell deeply in love with **Clodia**, the **wife of Q. Caecilius Metellus** and sister of Clodius (maybe). He calls her **Lesbia** in his poems. At first, this Lesbia returned his love, then she became unfaithful and rejected him. This caused Catullus to return to Verona. When he returned to Rome, Clodia had already taken a new lover. In 57 B.C., Catullus **went to Bithynia** as a staff member of the governor **Gaius Memmius**. He visited **his brother's grave** near Troy, and wrote an effigy (**poem 101**) about this. After returning to Rome, Catullus died at age 30 in 54 B.C.

His poems: in various meters, address various themes. Hendecasyllabics and elegiac couplet are the most common meters of Catullus.

Gaius Julius **Caesar**: a famous military and political leader, **born in Rome in 102 B.C.** He was regarded as an excellent orator, almost Cicero's equal, though **he followed the Attic style**, and he was a leading lawyer. He had many military successes, including a conquest of Gaul. He wrote **Commentarii de Bello Gallico** ("Commentaries on the Gallic Wars") **in seven books, one for each year from 58 to 52 B.C.** **Hirtius**, one of Caesar's officers, **wrote an eighth book**. Caesar also wrote **Commentarii de Bello Civili** ("Commentaries on the Civil War"), of which **he only finished three books**.

(Publius Vergilius Maro) **Vergil**: a poet, **born in Andes, near Mantua in 70 B.C.** He is said to have begun his *Eclogues* in Mantua in 43 B.C. Vergil lost his farm after Philippi, but later got it back. **Maecenas became his patron**, and possibly introduced Vergil to Octavian, who became Vergil's greatest promoter. The *Eclogues* were published in 37 B.C. Vergil spent seven years working on the *Georgics*, published in 29 B.C. He then spent **the last ten years of his life working on the Aeneid**. Vergil died of a fever **in Brundisium in 19 B.C., and was buried in Naples**. Vergil asked his friends **Varius and**

Tucca to burn the Aeneid, but instead, Augustus ordered them to edit it, deleting some extraneous parts, but adding nothing.

The *Eclogues*: a collection of **ten pastoral poems** in dactylic hexameter, also called the *Bucolics*.

The ***Georgics***: a poem four books long in dactylic hexameter. The Georgics were suggested by **Maecenas**, promoting Octavian's program of moving people from the cities to farms.

Vitruvius: wrote ***De Architectura***, dedicated to Augustus.

(Quintus Horatius Flaccus) **Horace**: a poet, born in **Venusia in 65 B.C.** Horace met Vergil, who introduced him to **Maecenas**, who later gave Horace a **Sabine farm**. Horace published his first book of satires in 35 B.C., his second book of satires and the *Epodes* in 30 B.C., three books of *Odes* between 33 and 23 B.C., a

book of epistles in 20 B.C., the *Carmen Saeculare* in 17 B.C., in 15 B.C., a fourth book of *Odes*, second book of epistles and the *Ars Poetica*. Horace **died in 8 B.C.**

Saturae (*Sermones*): deal with many subjects, from the superiority of country over city life, to false virtues, to friendship, and include many character sketches. They show **influence from Lucilius**.

(Titus Livius) **Livy**: a historian **born in Patavium** (Padua) in 59 B.C. His great work is ***Ab Urbe Condita*** ("From the Founding of the City"), begun in 29 B.C. Livy died in A.D. 19. *Ab Urbe Condita* is **142 books long**. Much of it is lost. Only 21 (or 35?) books remain, though *Periochae* (Abstracts) exist for the entire work, and summaries of some books are extant. Books I-X, XXI-XL, and parts of XLI-XLV are all that remain of Livy's original work. Only the first book discusses the monarchy. The history **ends in 9 B.C. with the death of Drusus**. Livy's work glorifies Rome, but is also considered an accurate historical source.

Sextus **Propertius**: a poet, **born in Assisium** c 50 B.C. He fell passionately in love with a woman he calls **Cynthia** in his poems, possibly **Hostia**, a courtesan. Propertius wrote four books of elegies, the first published in 28 B.C., the last in 16 B.C. Like Vergil and Horace, **Maecenas** was Propertius' primary patron.

Elegies: these poems are mostly about Propertius' love for Cynthia. His poems go from initial happiness in his love, to greater and greater despair from her unfaithfulness. Eventually, he breaks off the relationship and expresses his shame at how blinded he was by love. He says that he will not be moved by her tears. Book IV contains one poem telling of Cynthia's death. Book IV contains poems on other subjects, such as Rome and its past heroes, and fidelity.

Albius **Tibullus**: a poet, born c 48 B.C. He **belonged to the circle of M. Valerius Messalla**, a patron of several poets. Tibullus published elegies in two books. The first book is called ***Delia***, after the woman with whom Tibullus was in love (possibly named **Plania**), the second is ***Nemesis***.

After Tibullus' death, a third book of poems was published under his name. It contains **six poems by Sulpicia, the only extant poems by a Roman woman**, as well as a few

poems by Tibullus, and some by other authors. Tibullus liked to use hybrid Greek-Latin words and alliteration in his poems, as well as *figura etymologica*, the use in one phrase of more than one form of the same word.

The emperor Augustus supposedly coined the phrase “On the Greek Kalends”, meaning never. He also wrote an autobiography, fourteen books long, which is lost. *Monumentum Ancyranum (Res Gestae)* is an account of the public life of Augustus.

(Publius Ovidius Naso) **Ovid**: poet born in 43 B.C. **in Sulmo**. Ovid published *Amores*, *Heroides*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*, *Medicina Faciei*, and a tragedy called *Medea*, of which only two lines survive, before A.D. 8. *Metamorphoses* was already complete that year, when Augustus **banished Ovid to Tomi**. Ovid said that **a song and an error** caused this exile, the song being the *Ars Amatoria*, and the error possibly being involvement with Augustus’ granddaughter Julia, a woman of very low morals. On Tomi, Ovid wrote the *Fasti*, the *Tristia*, the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the *Halieutica*, and *Ibis*. Ovid died while still in exile in A.D. 18.

The first century B.C. is called the Golden Age of Latin Literature.
The Silver Age is subsequent literature until the Christian period.

The Roman emperor **Claudius** wrote a **Greek history of the Etruscans** and a history of Rome from Julius Caesar’s death as well as a comparison of Cicero and Pollio.

Lucius Annaeus **Seneca the Elder**: called “**Rhetor**,” he wrote *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae*. 5 books of *Controversiae* and 1 book of *Suasoriae* survive.

Lucius Annaeus **Seneca the Younger**: Also known as the Philosopher and the Stoic, he was a playwright, **born in 4 B.C. in Corduba in Spain**. Seneca was a Stoic in philosophy. The emperor Caligula called Seneca’s work “sand without lime.” Writings: *Dialogi*: ten treatises on philosophy in twelve books

Apocolocyntosis (“The Pumpkinification”): a work in prose and verse mocking Claudius, stating that instead of becoming a god, he had become a pumpkin.

De Clementia: a fragmentary treatise originally in three books

De Beneficiis: a treatise in seven books

Naturales Quaestiones: a work on natural science from the Stoic viewpoint

Epistulae Morales: 124 letters **to his friend Lucilius** on philosophy and Seneca’s experiences

Nine or ten tragedies, including:

Medea: based on Euripides’ play, except more sympathetic to Jason

Phaedra: loosely based on Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, focuses on Phaedra.

Oedipus: based on Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*

Agamemnon: based on Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, with virtually the same plot, but different characterization.

Thyestes: has no extant model, was one of Seneca’s most liked plays. It deals with Atreus’ revenge on his brother Thyestes for stealing his wife and committing various

other injustices. Atreus feeds Thyestes' sons to their father and curses his house by this action.

Hercules Oetaeus: modeled on Sophocles' *Trachinian Women*.

Octavia: a tragedy attributed to Seneca, but probably not by him. This play is **the only complete fabula praetexta**. Octavia, after Nero divorces her for Poppaea, organizes a rebellion against him, but is defeated and executed.

(Gaius Plinius Secundus) **Pliny the Elder**: born in A.D. 23 in Comum, The **Historia Naturalis** is Pliny's only surviving work. It is an encyclopedia in **37 books**. It contains information on physics and mathematics, geography and ethnology, anthropology and physiology, animals, botany, herbal medicine, and minerals. Pliny claims to have consulted experts for all these subjects. Lost works of Pliny, learned of from a letter about Pliny written by his nephew Pliny the Younger to Tacitus, include a life of Pomponius Secundus, a **history of German wars in twenty books**, a study of linguistics in eight, and a treatise on the use of the javelin from horseback.

(Aulus Persius Flaccus) **Persius**: a satirist, born at Volaterrae in Etruria in 34. Persius was a **friend of the poet Lucan**. Persius died in 62, and requested that his poems be destroyed, leaving only his satires. Lucan said about his work "That is real poetry, whereas what I have written is utter tripe, child's play."

Saturae: six poems in dactylic hexameter.

(Marcus Fabius Quintilianus) **Quintilian**: a rhetorician, born in Calagurris in Spain in 35. He received a good education from the leading orators of the time and practiced law. He was the first person to receive a paid professorship from Vespasian. He outlived his wife and two sons, dying c 100. Quintilian's only extant work is the **Institutio Oratoria**, a **twelve book long treatise on a perfect orator**. The orator must have personal integrity, and must have the necessary technique. He must read widely, have vast knowledge, and he must know how to connect his words and subjects precisely.

The orator is discouraged from being too grandiose or too uninspiring. Quintilian also wrote a lost treatise called *De Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae*. **Martial called him "The supreme guide of wayward youth."**

(Marcus Annaeus Lucanus) **Lucan**: an epic poet, born in Corduba in 39. Nephew to Seneca, he received a good education in Rome. Lucan was very talented, and became a favourite of Nero, who appointed him quaestor. However, Lucan aroused Nero's jealousy, and the emperor forbade Lucan from reading or publishing his poetry. Lucan consequently joined **the Pisonian conspiracy**, and was **forced to commit suicide** on April 30, 65. Lucan's only extant work is the unfinished **Bellum Civile**, often called **Pharsalia**; it is an epic poem in **ten books** about Julius Caesar's struggle against the senatorial party. The poem is in dactylic hexameter like other epics, but **does not include the intervention of deities**. The poem portrays Caesar as a villain and is **complementary of Pompey**. It also **promotes Stoicism**.

Gaius **Petronius** Arbiter: a writer and statesman, little is known of his life. He served as consul under Nero, who called him the *arbiter elegantiae* (judge of good taste). Petronius

took his own life in 65, another casualty of the failed **Pisonian conspiracy**. He is regarded as the author of the *Satyricon*, but there is insufficient information to be sure about this. The *Satyricon* is a fragmentary novel in prose and verse. The novel deals with the adventures of **Encolpius** and **Ascyltus**, and their servant **Giton**. **The longest surviving part of the *Satyricon* is the *cena Trimalchionis***. Interrupting the dinner are two stories, **one about a werewolf**, the other about two witches stealing a boy and leaving a figure of straw in his place.

Publius Papinius **Statius**: a poet, born in Naples c 40. He was taught poetry by his father. Statius went to Rome and lived there until 94, when he returned to Naples. He died there in 96. Statius wrote the *Thebaid*, an **epic poem in twelve books** telling the story of the feud between Polyneices and Eteocles and the Seven Against Thebes legend. He began the *Achilleid*, an epic about Achilles, but never finished it. He wrote 32 *Silvae*, poems on various subjects. He also wrote an epic poem about Domitian's German Wars, and *Agave*, a pantomime.

Silius Italicus: author of *Punica*, a **17 book long poem about the 2nd Punic War**. He was **considered the worst Latin poet**, though Martial commended his work. He starved himself to death.

(Marcus Valerius Martialis) **Martial**: a poet **born in Bilbilis in Spain** c 40. He was well-educated and came to Rome in 63. He met Quintilian, Lucan, and Seneca, and began to write. He eventually rose to the rank of tribune and was given *ius trium liberorum* (because of his poverty). Martial returned to Spain in 100 and died there in 104. Martial wrote the *Liber Spectaculorum* in 80, in honor of Titus' opening of the Coliseum. Martial is **most famous for epigrams**; fourteen books of them survive, a total of 1500 epigrams. They deal with a huge variety of subjects. He did not use mythology, saying "*Hominem pagina nostra sapit*" ("My page contains the flavor of men"). Many deal with his frustration with unreliable patrons. He criticises Ovid, and complains about the nature of women. Like other poets, he was sure his poetry would last forever. Martial wrote several epigrams over many years to his friend Julius Martialis. His most moving epigram is for a slave girl who died before age six. It asks the earth to "lie gently on the child who walked so lightly on the earth."

Publius Cornelius **Tacitus**: Little is known of his early life, but he probably born in northern Italy c. 55 in an aristocratic family. In 78, he married the daughter of Cn. Julius Agricola. Works:

Dialogus de Oratoribus: the earliest work attributed to Tacitus, his authorship of it is disputed. Written c 81, it discusses the decline in oratory at the time.

Agricola: a biography of Tacitus' father-in-law, it was published in 98. It is very complementary of Agricola, telling of his military exploits in Britain and personal virtue.

Germania: also published in 98, it discusses the geography, politics, and customs of the German people. He recognizes the flaws of the Germans, but still considers them more virtuous than the Romans of his time.

Historiae: originally a history from **69-96**, twelve books long, books VI-XII are lost, and only part of book V survives. The extant part ends with Titus' conquest of Jerusalem and the Batavian revolt.

Annales: a history **18 books long**, recording the years **14-68**, like *Historiae*, most of it is lost.

(Decius Junius Juvenalis) **Juvenal**: a **satirist** born in Aquinum c 60. He lived in Rome during Domitian's reign. Juvenal was banished by Domitian to Egypt, possibly for mentioning an actor Paris who had an affair with the emperor's wife. Juvenal returned to Rome in 96 after Domitian's death. He was possibly helped by the emperor Hadrian in obtaining a farm at Tibur, where he died c 130. He wrote 16 satires.

(Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus) **Pliny the Younger**: the nephew and heir of Pliny the Elder, Pliny was **born in Comum** in 62. He studied under Quintilian and became a lawyer. He served as consul under Trajan and in 111 became **governor of Bithynia**. He died c 114. One speech of Pliny, *Panegyricus*, is extant. Pliny is **most famous for letters**, writing ten books of them. He endowed a library in his hometown. His letters discuss mainly practical matters, such as law, finance, and the treatment of Christians. Best known is the letter describing Vesuvius' eruption. Another famous one discusses a haunted house in Athens.

Gaius **Suetonius** Tranquillus: a historian born c 70 to an equestrian family. Suetonius worked for Trajan and Hadrian, receiving the *ius trium liberorum*. He died c 140.

Suetonius wrote:

De Viris Illustribus ("On Famous Men"): biographies of various literary figures.

Biographies of Horace, Lucan, and Terence are extant, and possibly of Vergil, Tibullus, and Persius.

De Grammaticis: a treatise on grammar

De Rhetoribus: on oratory.

Suetonius' most famous work is **De Vita Caesarum** ("The Lives of the Caesars"), which is a biography of Julius Caesar and the emperors through Domitian. It contains a lot of personal information about the Caesars.

Lucius **Apuleius**: born c 125 at Madaura, a Roman colony near Numidia. Apuleius was **accused of winning his wife by magic** in order to gain her wealth by her relatives. He wrote the **Apologia** (or *De Mage*) defending himself. The charges were dropped and Apuleius lived a happy life, though it is unknown precisely when he died. Many of Apuleius' works are lost. His extant works besides *Apologia* are: *Florida*, a collection of passages from his speeches; *De Platone*, on Plato's philosophy; *De Deo Socratis*, on Socrates conception of the gods and daimones; a translation of the Greek treatise *De Mundo*; and his most famous work, **The Golden Ass** (or *Metamorphoses*), an early novel in which the main character **Lucius is transformed into a donkey** and then goes on many adventures. It includes **the story of Cupid and Psyche**.

Aulus Gellius: the author of "Attic Nights" (**Noctes Atticae**).