

Review of Latin Literature for the Purpose of Certamen

Types of Roman plays:

Fabula palliata: Comedy in a Greek setting

Fabula togata: Comedy in a Roman setting

Fabula cothurnata/crepidata: Tragedy in a Greek setting

Fabula praetexta: Tragedy

https://fhslatinclub.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/myth_study_guide.pdf in a Roman setting (usually historical)

Livius Andronicus

Place of Birth: **Tarentum**

Patron: Livius Salinator

Career Activities: served as a *Grammaticus*

Works:

1. 8 tragedies, 5 of which concerned the Trojan War
2. Palliatae: *Gladiolus* and *Ludius*
3. **Translation of the Odyssey into Saturnian meter (Odusia)**

Gnaeus Naevius

Place of Birth: Campania

Facts of life: **a plebian** (rare for early authors), fought in the First Punic War. **Attacked the family of the Metelli, was possibly exiled.**

Death: 204 or 201 in Utica, Africa.

Works:

1. Many tragedies and comedies
2. Two praetextae: *Romulus* and *Clastidium*
3. ***Bellum Poenicum* (Saturnian meter, placed in 7 books by Lampadio)**
4. Comically, Plautus' most distinguished predecessor

Caecilius Statius

Born: Mediolanum (Milan) between 230 and 220, likely a freedman

Close friend of Ennius, buried near him

Death: 168 BC

Works:

1. About 40 titles, all palliatae. Best known comedy is *Plocium* (The Necklace).

Quintus Ennius

Born: at **Rudiae**, 239 BC; Suetonius called him semigraecus; owing to languages spoken in region, referred to his **three hearts as Latin, Greek, and Oscan**.

Arrival in Rome: **Cato the Elder brought Ennius to Rome** from Sicily after making his acquaintance in Sardinia.

Patron: **Marcus Fulvius Nobilior**

Death: 169 BC, finished *Thyetes* at this point

Works:

1. **Annals, an 18 book poem written in hexameters**
2. *Ambracia and Sabinae (praetextae)*
3. Hedyphagetica (Eating Well), a didactic work on gastronomy; the first attested Latin poem in hexameters
4. Sota, a text in verses
5. Four book of *Saturae*
6. *Scipio*
7. Philosophical works: Euhemerus, Epicharmus, Protrepticus
8. Possible epigrams in elegiac couplets

Famous lines: O Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta, tyranne, tulisti

For centuries, the quintessential Roman poet, until Vergil

Marcus Porcius Cato (The Elder)

Born: 234 at Tusculum

Career: Military tribune in Sicily during Second Punic War, aided by Lucius Valerius Flaccus, with whom he was consul in 195 (as a novus homo) and censor in 184.

Death: 149 BC, prior to his desired destruction of Carthage

Works:

1. **Origines- historical work written in 7 books. Seldom used names, never referred to the person of Hannibal, only dictator Cathaginiensium.**
2. **De Agri Cultura- earliest Latin prose text that has survived, preface and 170 short chapters**
3. Carmen de Moribus
4. Apophthegmata: collection of memorable sayings

Lines: Rem tene, verba sequentur (Know the subject, the words will follow)

Marcus Pacuvius

Born: 220 BC in Brundisium, **the nephew of Ennius**

Career: also known as a painter

Connections: known to members of the Scipionic Circle

Death: Tarentum in 130 BC

Works:

1. Wrote tragedies exclusively, 12 titles of cothurnatae are certain
2. Wrote the praetexta **Paullus, after the victor of Pydna.**

Cicero judged him the greatest of the Latin poets. He was, however, greatly criticized by Lucilius.

Accius

Born: 170 BC at Pisaurum to freedmen parents

Death: between 90 and 80 BC

Vehemently attacked by Lucilius

Works:

1. Most prolific Latin writer of tragedies: more than 40 titles survive
2. Wrote two praetexta, the Brutus, and the Decius/Aeneadae (about Publius Decius Mus at the Battle of Sentinum in 295 BC)
3. Didascalica, in at least 9 books, a mixture of prose and poetry, wherein he proposed spelling reforms
4. Sotadicorum Liber
5. Annales (at least 27 books)

Lucilius

Birth: Date uncertain, but at Suessa Aurunca

Life: linked to the Scipionic circle “he is the first man of letters of good family to lead the life of a writer, deliberately removed from public offices and public life.”

Death: 102 BC

Works:

1. **30 books of satires**, written in different meters (dactylic hexameters, elegiac couplets, and iambic and trochaic meters) He calls his compositions poemata or sermons, but it has been proposed that the original name of his work was Schedia (Greek for improvisations.)

Quintilian: satura quidem tota nostra est (Satire is completely a Roman genre).

Lines:

Ex praecordiis efero versum (from my heart I bring forth my poetry)

Decimus Laberius and Publilius Syrus

Both of these men were writers of mimes.

Laberius was regarded as on a higher level. There are 43 titles of his works. He lived from 106-43, an exact contemporary of Cicero. He was a Roman knight. After attacking Caesar in one of his works, the dictator compelled him to act in his own play, something that the Romans considering degrading for a knight.

Syrus was Laberius's rival and not of free birth. He is known for his ability to make up maxims, or *sententiae*.

Plautus

Born: Date uncertain, perhaps between 255-250 BC at Sarsina.

Death: 184 BC

Works:

1. Through the intervention of Varro, **21 plays** of Plautus have reached us. The longest comedy is *Miles Gloriosus*, while the shortest is *Curculio*. Among the famous ones are *Aulularia* (The Golden Pot), *Captivi* (The Prisoners, no females), *Cistellaria* (The Comedy of the Chest), *Mostellaria* (The Comedy of the Ghost), *Menaechmi* (a comedy of errors), *Pseudolus*, and *Trinummus* (The Three Coins).

Plautus' plays are very predictable and often use the same type of character, i.e., a witty slave, an old man, a lover, a pimp, etc. **Plautus was the first Latin playwright to dedicate himself exclusively to comedy.**

Terrence

Born: uncertain, around 185/184 or earlier, **at Carthage**.

Relations: originally the slave of a Terentius Lucanus, he maintained close relations with the Scipio Aemilianus and Laelius, who were often rumored to have written his plays.

Death: 159 BC, by drowning

Anecdote that Terence read his first work, the *Andria*, to Caecilius Statius is likely untrue.

Works: Six comedies, all of which are intact

1. **Andria**, contaminated (*contaminatio*) with Menander's *Perinthia*.
2. **Hecyra**, which the audience frequently deserted
3. *Hautontimoroumenos*
4. *Eunuchus*
5. *Phormio*
6. *Adelphoe*

Terence often used the **prologues** of the plays as a way in which to introduce the theme or respond to his critics.

Julius Caesar: Terence was “puri sermonis amator,” a lover of pure diction.

Catullus

Born: 87/85-84 BC at Verona

Woman in poetry: **Lesbia, in reality, Clodia**, the woman whom Cicero attacked in his Pro Caelio.

Associations: Cornelius Nepos (dedication of poetry in poem 1), Gaius Memmius (served as member of an entourage when Memmius was governor of Bithynia)

Death: c. 54 BC

Works: 116 poems, in three groups. First (1-60) are *nugae* or trifles. Second (61-68) are heterogenous. Last (69-116) are generally short and in elegiac couplets, his so-called epigrams. Poems 61 and 62 are epithalamia, nuptial songs. Poem 63 is an epyllion (mini-epic) written in Galliamics. Poem 66 is an act of homage to Callimachus, the chief poet of Alexandrianism. Early poems include topics such as an invitation to dinner, a welcome for a returning friend, the death of a sparrow. Poem 5 is the famous “Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,” love poem.

Lucretius

Life information: almost nothing, perhaps lived from 98-55 BC, with no idea of area. According to Jerome, **he was driven to madness by a love-philter or potion and his work was revised by Cicero.**

Works: **De Rerum Natura**, 6 books of hexameters that expounded Epicurean philosophy. This is a major didactic poem of history. The work is dedicated to Gaius Memmius (perhaps the friend of Catullus). The beginning of the poem invokes Venus. The poem is split into 3 dyads (two books per dyads). The first dyad talks about nature, the second talks about anthropology (wherein Lucretius lambasts the idea of love) and the final about cosmology (ends with a description of the plague of Athens in 430 BC).

Vergil wrote, “felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,” referring to Lucretius, in the Georgics.

Varro

Born: 116 at Reate

Life: Quaestor in 85, later a tribune and pretor. Fought in a Dalmatian campaign and alongside Pompey against Sertorius in Spain. He sided with Pompey during the civil war and returned to Italy after the disaster at Pharsalus. While placed on the proscription list in 43, he was saved by Fufius Calenus.

Death: 27 BC, a very long life for a Roman.

Works:

1. Some sources list Varro as the author of over 600 books.
2. Preserved list: De Lingua Latina (6 of 25 books remain, dedicated to Cicero except first 4 books), De Re Rustica (3 books).
3. Saturae Menippeae (Menippean Satires in 150 books)
4. Lots of works about history, including Antiquitates in 25 books, Rerum Humanarum, written first in 16 books, and Rerum Divinarum.

Titus Pomponius Atticus- Liber Annalis, was an Epicurean, friend of Cicero.

Nigidius Figulus- 29 book Comentariorum Grammaticorum

Cornelius Nepos

Birth: Cisalpine Gaul around 100 BC

Friends: Atticus, Cicero

Death: after 27 BC

Works:

1. Chronica in 3 books (to which Catullus refers in poem 1)
2. Exempla in at least 5 books
3. Biography of Cato the Elder and Cicero
4. **De Viris Illustribus**, at least 16 books, of which the book on foreign military leaders survives (De Excellentibus Ducibus Exterarum Gentium), and the biographies of Cato and Atticus.

Julius Caesar

Birth: 100 BC, Rome

Life: See history packet

Death: 44 BC, Rome

Works:

1. **Comentarii de Bello Gallico in seven books; Aulus Hirtius added the eight.**
2. **Comentarii de Bello Civili in three books**
3. De Analogia
4. Laudes Herculis, Oedipus, Dicta Collectanea, Iter (poem), Anticato

Sallust

Birth: 86 BC, Amiternum

Life: rich family, but a novus homo nevertheless,. Quaestor in 55/54, he lead a campaign against Milo and Cicero. In 50 he was expelled from the Senate for moral turpitude. He fought on Caesar's side in the Civil War, then readmitted to the Senate. Caesar made him governor of Africa Nova. Accused of embezzlement, he retired after his return to Rome, where he lived in luxury.

Death: 35/34 BC

Works: **Sallust was a writer of historical monographs**

1. **Bellum Catalinae (De Catalinae Coniuratione)**
2. **Bellum Iugurthae**
3. **Histories/Historiae**, left incomplete in book 5
4. Probably not the poem Empedoclea

Cornelius Gallus

Birth: 69 BC, at Forum Iulii, in Narbonese Gaul

Life: Fellow student of Vergil, he sided with Octavian against Antony. After this, he was appointed prefect of Egypt. He was prideful and fell into disgrace, condemned into exile, and then committed suicide in 26.

Vergil dedicated the 10th Eclogue to Gallus.

Women in Poetry: Wrote about Lycoris, who was the mime actress Volumnia, in reality Cytheris

Works:

1. Amores, 4 books of elegies, of which a papyrus discovery in 1979 provided verses.

Tibullus

Birth: Between 55 and 50 BC, perhaps at Gabii or Pedum.

Death: 18 BC

Patron: **Messalla Corvinus**, also the patron of Lygdamus, Ovid, and his own niece Sulpicia.

Women in poetry: Delia, who was actually Plania

Works:

1. A heterogenous collection of elegies in three books, known as the **Corpus Tibullianum**, of which only the first two are attributed to Tibullus with certainty.

Known as the poet of the fields, he writes about the rural world as an alternative to city life. Quintilian described him as “terse and eloquent.”

Propertius

Birth: Between 49 and 47 BC, at Asisium

Patron: **Maecenas**

Women in poetry: **Cynthia, Hostia in reality**

Death: around 16 BC

Works:

1. **Four books of elegies, of which the first is called Monobiblos.** The first word of the first book is Cynthia. (Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis)

Ovid

Birth: 43 BC in Sulmo

Women in poetry: Corinna

Patron: Messala Corvinus

Works: (all extant poems written in elegiac couplets except for the Metamorphoses)

1. Amores-originally published in 5 books, now in 3, they comprise 49 elegies
2. Heroides- 15 letters written from women to their husbands, then 3 pairs, making a total of 21.
3. Ars Amatoria
4. Remedia Amoris
5. Medicamina Faciei Femineae
6. Metamorphoses- 15 books
7. Fasti
8. Tristia- 5 books
9. Medea
10. Epistulae Ex ponto-4 books, 46 elegies
11. Ibis-short invective poem
12. (Probably spurious) Halieutica- didactic hexameter poem on fishing
13. (Spurious) Consolatio ad Liviam, Nux

Livy

Birth: 59 BC at Patavium (hence the claim of Patavinitas)

Life: Devoted himself entirely to the study of history. Guided the future emperor Claudius in his historical interests.

Death: Patavium, 17 BC

Works:

1. Ab Urbe Condita, written in 142 books, of which 1-10 and 21-45 survive. Epitomes of the remaining books are called Periochae.

Livy wrote in an annalistic fashion, that is to say, year-by-year, in contradistinction to Sallust.

Asinius Pollio

Birth: Teate, 76 BC

Death: AD 4

Life: Supporter of Caesar and then of Antony, was consul in 40 BC and proconsul in 39 BC, then removed himself from political life. In his youth he had been a friend of Catullus and Helvius Cinna. Vergil dedicated the fourth Eclogue to him.

Works:

1. Wrote tragedies and was an orator in the Atticist tradition
2. Histories, begun in 35 BC, probably covered the period from the First Triumvirate (60 BC) onwards. Unfortunately, they are lost.

Seneca refers to his writings as “composito salebrosa,” or rough compositions.

Pompeius Trogus

Wrote the *Historiae Philippicae* in 44 books, in which he focused the majority of his material on Macedon, reserving only the final two books for Rome.

Velleius Paterculus

Born at Aeculanum, Velleius served as a cavalry commander under the emperor Tiberius. He wrote an *Historiae* in 2 books, dedicated to Marcus Vinicius, the consul of 30 AD. Unlike Tacitus, he provides a positive view of Tiberius.

Valerius Maximus

Little is known about the life of this author, who was a client of Sextus Pompeius, consul of 14 AD. He wrote 9 books of *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium* (Memorable Deeds and Sayings).

Tibullus Labienus was an historian whose works Augustus ordered to be burnt.

Crementius Cordus similarly committed suicide under the reign of Tiberius after his *Annales* glorified Brutus and termed Cassius the last of the Romans.

Quintus Curtius Rufus-unknown personage who authored the ten book *Historiae Alexandri Magni* in ten books, a work of history as literary entertainment.

Verrius Flaccus was the greatest grammarian of the early empire, who tutored the grandsons of Augustus, Lucius and Gaius. He wrote two important works, the *Reru, Etruscarum Libri* and *De Verborum Signifactu*, a dictionary of difficult or obsolete terms.

Vitruvius Pollio was an officer for Caesar in his engineering corps. He wrote a ten book treatise *De Architectura*, dedicated to August, between 27-23 BC.

Celsus wrote during Tiberius' reign and made an encyclopaedic handbook which covered six artes. Only the eight books on medicine survive.

Columella, a contemporary of Seneca the Younger from Gades in Spain, continued the tradition of agricultural literature. He wrote *De Re Rustica*, which occurred in two editions. From the first we only have *De Arboribus*, whereas the second, in 12 books, we possess entirely. The 10th book, *De Cultu Hortorum*, is an homage to Vergil.

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa drew up a gigantic map of the whole world, which was accompanied by *comentarii*.

Pomponius Mela, from Tingentera, wrote a "Chronographia," or *Description of Places* in 3 books which are preserved. He is the first Latin author who is a pure geographer and whose work has survived.

Apicius was a contemporary of Augustus to whom a manuscript of recipes divided into 10 books called *De Re Coquinaria* has been attributed. In fact, this book includes writings from as late as the 4th century AD.

Seneca the Elder (the Rhetor)

Birth: Corduba, Spain, 50 BC

Death: Unknown

Work:

1. *Oratorum et Rhetorum Sententiae Divisiones Colores*. Seneca illustrates the two ways of exercising rhetorical skills then in vogue: *contraversia*, which makes the orator take sides in a fictitious case, and *suasoriae*, which consist in an orator's attempt to guide the action of a mythical or historical person.

Seneca the Younger

Born: Corduba, around 4 BC

Life: Apparently condemned to death by Caligula, he was saved by a lover of the emperor.

Claudius, however, banished him for supposed involvement in the adultery of Livilla, Caligula's sister, to Corsica. He then served as educator and guided the emperor Nero until he was forced to commit suicide after the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 AD.

Works:

1. *Dialogi*- 12 philosophical treatises all of which adhere to Stoic principles
2. Other Stoic works-*De Beneficiis*, *De Clementia*
3. 124 *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* (Moral Letters to Lucilius)
4. *Naturales Quaestiones*-7 books, perhaps 8 originally
5. 9 *cothurnatae* tragedies
6. *Ludus de Morte Claudii*/*Apocolocyntosis*- a Menippean satire on the deification of Claudius
7. Supposed Epigrams
8. (Spurious) *Octavia*, the sole surviving *fabula praetexta*
9. (Spurious) Letters to St. Paul
10. (Possibly spurious) Epigrams

Pheadrus

Lucan

Birth: 39 AD at Corduba, **he is the nephew of Seneca the Younger**