How to use this book

This is a source book. It provides a selection of ancient written and material evidence, on eight topics, and encourages you to use that evidence to draw conclusions about the Roman world and its people. To help you read, appreciate, and evaluate the Latin passages, a series of language notes and exercises, together with notes on authors' use of stylistic features, is included.

The Latin passages are presented in the following way:

A small font is used to introduce passages and for summaries of omitted passages.

A larger font indicates the passage is a translation.

The Latin is unadapted from the original. Occasionally some passages are abridged (i.e. some words or sentences in the original Latin are cut) to keep the focus on the theme of the chapter.

These abbreviations are used:

abl. = ablative
acc. = accusative
c. = about (for date)
cf. = compare (with)
dat. = dative
f. = feminine
gen. = genitive
lit. = literally
m. = masculine
n. = neuter
nom. = nominative
pl. = plural
sg. = singular
voc. = vocative

Passages are referred to by chapter and letter. For example, 37.E means Chapter 37, Passage E. Some longer passages are divided into parts, so 37.K.II means Chapter 37, Passage K, Part II.

Meanings are given if either the word has not previously been met in the course or its meaning in the passage is new.

The meaning of some new words is provided in the notes.

Author, title of the work, and location of the extract.

Images often provide additional evidence about the text or its theme. Artefacts from the ancient world may support or challenge the written evidence, while more recent artefacts show how some later generations or individuals have responded to the ideas in the texts. Further cultural context is found in essays alongside the Latin passages.

A colored bar identifies questions on the text.

A. Learning from the past

Livy, introducing his history of Rome, *Ab Urbe Condita*, has just stated that his main interest in the past is the moral attitudes that shaped history. He also expressed his belief in the decline of morality over the course of Roman history. Here he considers the moral lessons that can be learned from history.

The main reason why the study of history is beneficial and fruitful is that you observe lessons of every type, written down clearly in the record. From these you may select two things for yourself and your country: what to imitate, and what to avoid as being shamefully undertaken or shameful in its outcome.

cēterum aut mē amor negōtiī susceptī fallit, aut nūlla umquam rēs pūblica nec maior nec sānctior nec bonīs exemplīs dītior fuit, nec in quam cīvitātem tam sērae avāritia luxuriaque immigrāverint, nec ubi tantus ac tam diū paupertātī ac parsimōniae honōs fuerit: adeō quantō rērum minus, tantō minus cupiditātis erat.

nūper dīvitiae avāritiam, et abundantēs voluptātēs dēsīderium per luxum atque libīdinem pereundī perdendīque omnia invēxēre.

Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.Pref.11–12

suscipiō, ere *undertake*
dītior = dīvitior
sērus, a, um *late*
avāritia, ae, f. *greed*
immigrō, āre *arrive*
paupertās, ātis, f. *poverty*
parsimōnia, ae, f. *thrift*
honōs = honor
voluptās, ātis, f. *pleasure*
luxus, ūs, m. *luxury*
invehō, ere *bring in*

Cincinnatus is depicted holding his plow in his left hand. In his right, he carries the fascēs, a bundle of sticks bound together with an axe, which symbolized authority and power. This statue stands in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1   **cēterum**: *with regard to other matters*; expresses the transition from one theme to another.
     aut … aut: Livy suggests two reasons for his belief that Rome resisted avarice for such a long time. The expansion of the second alternative indicates it is his preferred explanation.
     amor negōtiī: *passion for his task*, i.e. to record the achievements of the Roman people.
2–3   **nec**: the repetition of **nec** suggests a listing of key points. The growing length of the phrases and clauses emphasizes the moral goodness of Rome.
2   **bonīs exemplīs**: episodes from early Roman history that demonstrate the high moral caliber of its people and provide role models. These **exempla** were standard fare in Roman schools.
3   **tam sērae … tam diū**: i.e. the traditional Republican virtue of frugality persisted for a longer time in Rome than it did elsewhere.
4   **adeō**: *in fact*.
     quantō … tantō: *by how much … by so much*; ablative of degree of difference.
6   **nūper**: marking the contrast with the previous period of Roman history just summarized.
6–7   **dīvitiae → invēxēre**: the points come in four pairs; note the build-up to a climax, with each pair marking an escalation of vices; the third pair has alliteration of **l**-, while the last pair gains further emphasis through the alliteration and assonance of **per-** and **-ndī**, leading to the climactic **omnia**.

a.   What does Livy think is unique about Rome when it comes to examples of good behavior?
b.   **quantō rērum minus, tantō minus cupiditātis erat** (lines 4–5). What point is Cicero making here? Translate this phrase freely into several different English versions. Do you agree or disagree with this statement as a general truth?

Using the notes:

aut … aut = the note only refers to these words.
dīvitiae → invēxēre = note covers all intervening words.
supply or **understand**: add in a word which, for the sake of brevity, the author has left out. For example, 'supply **est**' means 'add **est** into the sentence'.
antecedent: the word or phrase to which another word, phrase or clause refers. For example, in the sentence **nāvem, quae ab Aegyptō nāvigāverat, vīdimus** (*We saw the ship which had sailed from Egypt*), **nāvem** is the antecedent of the relative clause **quae ab Aegyptō nāvigāverat**.
delayed or **postponed**: a word or phrase, which would usually be placed earlier in a Latin sentence, has been placed later.
apposition: a word or phrase placed next to another one to explain or modify it is said to be in apposition.
substantive: an adjective, participle, or pronoun used in place of a noun is called a substantive. A word used in this way is said to be used substantively.

Interpreting the Latin texts

The Latin texts in this book represent the views of the individuals who wrote them. Those people were a tiny percentage of the population of the Roman Empire; almost all were men, and the great majority were wealthy. Therefore, consider the extent to which it is reasonable to make assumptions about the views of the wider population from each text. Be aware, also, that we have selected these texts from a large body of Latin literature. The process of selection inevitably carries the risk that our own interests and views have introduced another type of bias (selection bias) into the sources you will encounter. Other people might select different texts and thereby present a different impression of the Roman world.

Finally, you may find that you can translate the author's words, but still not understand his or her meaning. Often the notes will help, but, where uncertainty persists, discuss the passage in class, and share ideas about what the author means. There may be no single correct interpretation, and at times the writing may be intentionally ambiguous.