

ANCIENT AUTHORS

Antipater: Antipater (2nd century BC) came from Sidon in Phoenicia and spent the last years of his life in Rome. He was a poet who wrote epigrams in Greek.

Apuleius: Lucius Apuleius (c. AD 155) was born in the Roman province of Africa and lived in Carthage. He was the author of the *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*, a novel about the adventures of a young man who is turned into an ass.

Augustus: Augustus (63 BC–AD 14) was born Gaius Octavius and became Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus when he was adopted by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar. He was known by the title Augustus after 27 BC when he became Rome's first emperor. The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (*Deeds of the Divine Augustus*) is an account of the career of Augustus written in the first person. Augustus left the document with his will, with instructions to the Senate to set up the text as an inscription. It was engraved on a pair of bronze pillars in front of Augustus' tomb in the Campus Martius. The original has not survived, but copies were carved in stone on monuments and temples all over the Roman Empire, and parts of these have survived.

Cassius Dio (also **Dio Cassius**): Cassius Dio Cocceianus (c. AD 164–after 229) was born in Bithynia. He had a political career as a consul in Rome and as governor of the provinces of Africa and Dalmatia. His history of Rome, written in Greek, covers the period from Aeneas' arrival in Italy to AD 229.

Cato: Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149 BC) was born at Tusculum, a town about sixteen miles from Rome. He had a distinguished military and political career, reaching the consulship and the office of censor, despite not being born into a senatorial family. He wrote a

book on farming, *De Agricultura* (*On Agriculture*). Cato was famous for his strictness and his criticism of contemporary morality. He wanted to return to the old Roman values of frugality and simplicity.

Catullus: Gaius Valerius Catullus (c. 84–c. 54 BC) was born in Verona, in northern Italy, to a wealthy family. Very little is known about his life. He came to Rome as a young man and spent some time in the province of Bithynia on the staff of the governor. He is best known for his love poems.

Celsus: Aulus Cornelius Celsus (first century AD), who lived in the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37), wrote a treatise on medicine, *De Medicina*.

Cicero: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) was a politician and lawyer, who was a leading figure in events at the end of the Roman Republic. He was born in a town not far from Rome and came to Rome to study. Although not born into the senatorial class, he reached the highest office of state, the consulship. He was executed on the orders of Mark Anthony during the unrest following the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. His surviving writings include speeches for the law courts, political speeches, philosophical essays, and personal letters to friends and family.

Epictetus: Epictetus (mid-1st to 2nd century AD) was born in Hierapolis in Phrygia and came to Rome when he was enslaved. His owner was Epaphroditus, Nero's freedman. After gaining his freedom, Epictetus studied Stoic philosophy and taught in Rome until he was banished by Emperor Domitian in AD 89. A summary of his ideas, the *Manual*, has survived along with records of his oral teachings (*Discourses*).

Euripides: Euripides (c. 480–c. 407/6 BC) was a Greek playwright from Athens. He wrote tragedies, of which eighteen have survived,

including *Bacchae* and *Medea*.

Homer: Homer is traditionally the author of the Greek epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which were composed about 750–700 BC. Nothing is known about his life. Both poems deal with the Trojan War, a ten-year war between the Greeks and the Trojans, and its aftermath. The subject of the *Iliad* is the anger of the hero Achilles and its effects, an episode in the final year of the war. The *Odyssey* tells of the adventures and sufferings of Odysseus after the war, and his return home from Troy to Ithaca.

Horace: Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65–8 BC) was born in Apulia, in the south of Italy. He was of humble origins, the son of a freedman who worked as a collector of payments at auctions. His father sent him to Rome and Athens to be educated, and he became one of the most celebrated poets of his day. Maecenas, the friend and adviser of Emperor Augustus, was his patron. His most famous works are the *Odes*, short poems on a variety of subjects, but he also wrote *Epodes*, *Satires*, and *Epistles*.

Josephus: Flavius Iosephus (AD 37–c. 100) was born in Jerusalem, in the Roman province of Judaea, to a wealthy, aristocratic family. His Hebrew name was Yosef ben Matityahu. He was captured in the Jewish Revolt against the Romans (AD 66–70), then, after the fall of Jerusalem, he lived in Rome and was given Roman citizenship. His history of the Jewish War (*Bellum Iudaicum*) was originally written in Aramaic, then translated into Greek. His other works were written in Greek: they include a history of the Jews, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* (*Jewish Antiquities*).

Julius Caesar: Gaius Iulius Caesar (100–44 BC), the general, politician, and dictator, belonged to an aristocratic Roman family. He was assassinated on the Ides (15th) of March 44 BC, by a group of senators who feared that he intended to put

an end to the republican system of government and keep supreme power for himself and his family. Caesar wrote an account of his campaigns in Gaul and Britain (58–52 BC), the *Commentaries* (also known as the *Gallic Wars*). They are written in the third person, as if to give an objective account of events.

Juvenal: Decius Iunius Iuvenalis (early 2nd century AD) was born in a town in Italy, but lived in Rome. He was the author of sixteen *Satires*, long poems criticizing and attacking the vices of his fellow Romans. The *Satires* have a bitter humour and pessimistic attitude, and there is much exaggeration. Nevertheless, Juvenal sheds light on contemporary Roman society and provides lots of detail about everyday life.

Livy: Titus Livius (59 BC–AD 17) was born at Patavium (modern Padua) in north-east Italy. Little is known about his life, but he probably came to Rome as an adult. He wrote *A History of Rome*, starting with its foundation and going up to his own lifetime. Originally there were 142 books, of which about twenty-five have survived.

Lucan: Annaeus Lucanus Marcus (AD 39–65) was born in Corduba (modern Cordoba), in Spain. He was from a well-connected equestrian family; his uncle was Nero's adviser, Seneca. After studying rhetoric and philosophy in Rome and Athens, he became a friend of Nero, who made him a quaestor. However, he lost the favour of the emperor and joined the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero. When the conspiracy was discovered, Lucan was forced to kill himself. He is the author of the *Pharsalia*, an epic poem about the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey.

Lucilius: (1st century AD) lived during the reign of Nero, but nothing more is known about his life. He wrote satirical epigrams in Greek.

Lucretius: Titus Lucretius Carus (c.94–c.55 BC) was the author of *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), a long poem about Epicureanism. Very little is known about his life.

Martial: Marcus Valerius Martialis (c.AD 40–c.104) was born at Bilbilis in Spain and came to live in Rome in about AD 64. He is best known for his short poems, known as *Epigrams*, which often criticize and mock the faults and vices of his fellow Romans. His *De Spectaculis* (*On the Spectacles*) is a collection of epigrams written to celebrate the opening of the Colosseum in AD 80, in the reign of Emperor Titus.

Ovid: Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC–AD 17) was born in a town near Rome and educated in the city. He abandoned a public career to become a poet. Emperor Augustus banished him to Tomis on the Black Sea (in modern Romania). According to Ovid, there were two reasons for his exile, **carmen** (a poem) and **error** (a mistake). The poem was *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*) which fell foul of laws introduced by Augustus to improve the morals of contemporary society. The mistake was probably connected to the love affairs of Augustus' granddaughter, Julia. Among his other works are love poems such as the *Amores* (*Loves*) and a long epic poem, the *Metamorphoses*, which is a collection of stories from mythology bound together by the theme of transformation.

Petronius: Petronius Arbiter (died AD 66) was a provincial governor and consul. He then became Emperor Nero's **arbiter elegantiae** (arbiter of taste), a play on his name; this meant he advised Nero on what was tasteful or elegant. He was falsely accused of being involved in a plot to kill Nero and committed suicide. Petronius was probably the author of the *Satyricon*, a novel about the adventures of three young men travelling in

southern Italy. The main episode is the *Cena Trimalchionis* (*Trimalchio's Dinner Party*). Trimalchio is a wealthy freedman to whose dinner party the three main characters are invited. Petronius mocks and grotesquely exaggerates the vulgar extravagance and bad taste of Trimalchio, and his ostentatious display of wealth.

Pliny the Elder: Gaius Plinius Secundus (AD 23/24–79) was born at Comum (modern Como) in northern Italy. He is known as Pliny the Elder to distinguish him from his nephew, known as Pliny the Younger. He had a career in military and government service, serving as procurator in several provinces before his final post as commander of the fleet at Misenum in Italy. He dedicated his spare time to research and writing, and among his many learned works is his *Natural History*, an encyclopaedic collection of facts and stories about a huge variety of subjects. It is a very useful source of information on many aspects of Roman life. In *Suburani* 'Pliny' refers to Pliny the Younger.

Pliny the Younger: Gaius Caecilius Plinius Secundus (AD 61/2–c.112) was the nephew of Pliny the Elder. He was born at Comum (modern Como) in northern Italy. He had a successful career as a lawyer, politician, and administrator, and his final post was as governor of Bithynia. His letters to friends, family, and colleagues include an exchange with Emperor Trajan when he was governor of Bithynia. The letters offer a glimpse into the lives, attitudes, and politics of the society of his time. Pliny wrote with the intention of publishing his letters, and at regular intervals during his lifetime he published collections of them. Although they are real personal letters, many of them resemble short essays on various themes. In *Suburani* 'Pliny' refers to Pliny the Younger.

Plutarch: Ploutarchos (c.AD 46–after 120) was a Greek biographer, historian, and philosopher. He took the name Lucius Mercius Plutarchus when he became a Roman citizen. Plutarch visited Rome, where he taught and gave lectures, but spent most of his life in his native Greece. Among his many works are biographies of famous Greek and Roman politicians and soldiers, the *Parallel Lives*, so called because they are arranged in pairs of Greek and Roman so that the subjects can be compared. He also wrote biographies of the Roman emperors. His biographies of Galba and Otho survive in full, and there are fragments of his lives of Tiberius and Nero.

Procopius: Procopios (c.AD 500–after 540) was a Greek historian, born in Caesarea, in the Roman province of Syria Palaestina.

Propertius: Sextus Propertius (c.50–before 2 BC) was born at Assisium (modern Assisi) in central Italy and educated at Rome. He wrote poems known as *Elegies*, many of them love poems.

Quintilian: Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c.AD 35–c.96) was born at Calagurris in Spain. He was a famous teacher of rhetoric in Rome; Pliny the Younger was one of his pupils, and he was tutor to the two great-nephews of Emperor Domitian. He was the author of a book on rhetoric, *Institutio Oratoria* (*Training in Oratory*).

Seneca the Elder: Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c.50 BC–c.AD 40) was born in Corduba (modern Cordoba) in Spain. He is known as Seneca the Elder to distinguish him from his son of the same name. He was the author of a book on rhetoric, parts of which survive. In *Suburani* 'Seneca' refers to Seneca the Younger.

Seneca the Younger: Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c.4 BC–AD 65) is sometimes known as Seneca the Younger to distinguish him from

his father of the same name, who was also a writer. He was born in Corduba (modern Cordoba) in Spain and came to Rome to be educated. He was Nero's tutor and, after Nero became emperor, his political adviser. In AD 65, after he had retired from public life, he was implicated in a conspiracy to overthrow Nero and was forced to commit suicide. Seneca was a philosopher, politician, and dramatist. Among his many writings are several works of moral philosophy which contain interesting details about life in Rome in the first century AD. Some of these are in the form of letters to friends and family. In *Suburani* 'Seneca' refers to Seneca the Younger.

Soranos: Soranos (late 1st century AD–c.138) was born in Ephesus, in the province of Asia. He studied medicine in Alexandria and practised in Rome. He wrote several works on medical subjects in Greek, including *On the Art of Surgery* (now lost) and *Gynaecology*.

Statius: Publius Papinius Statius (c.AD 45–c.96) was born in Neapolis (modern Naples) in Italy. His father was a poet and teacher of literature. He wrote an epic poem, the *Thebaid*, and a collection of shorter poems, the *Silvae*.

Strabo: Strabo (64 BC–after AD 21) was a Greek from Pontus who came to Rome in 44 BC to finish his education, then visited the city several times afterwards. His *Geography*, written in Greek, is a description of the main countries in the Roman world, including physical geography, history, and economic development. There is also much incidental detail about customs, animals, and plants.

Suetonius: Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c.AD 70–c.130) was a secretary at the imperial palace. He wrote biographies of Julius Caesar and the first eleven emperors, *Lives of the Caesars*. Although his position gave him access to the state

archives, he is not very reliable in his use of sources, and his work relies heavily on uncritical reporting of gossip and anecdote.

Tacitus: Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (c.AD 56–after 117) may have been born in Gaul. He had a successful political career in Rome and wrote two major works of history. *Annals* covered the period AD 14–68, from the death of Augustus to the death of Nero, and *Histories* continued with the years AD 69–96. Only parts of these works survive. Tacitus used as his sources the writings of earlier historians, official records, and his own experience. He was a supporter of the republican system of government and a harsh critic of the emperors and the imperial system. He claims to write without prejudice, but his bias is often evident.

Vegetius: Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus (late 4th to 5th century AD) was the author of *De Re Militari* (*On Military Matters*), which describes the training and organization of a Roman legion. Vegetius was not himself a soldier, and his work is a collection of material from various periods and sources.

Vergil (also **Virgil**): Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19 BC) was born at Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul and educated at Cremona, Mediolanum (modern Milan), and Rome. Maecenas, the friend and adviser of Emperor Augustus, was his patron, and he became the most celebrated poet of his day. His greatest work is the *Aeneid*, an epic poem which tells the story of the founding of the Roman race by the Trojan hero Aeneas. The poem is a celebration of the origin and growth of the Roman Empire and of the achievements of Augustus. Vergil also wrote the *Eclogues*, pastoral poems about the lives of shepherds, and the *Georgics*, a poem about farming.