



Roman Literary Culture, second edition (Ancient Society and History)

Elaine Fantham

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Scholars of ancient literature have often focused on the works and lives of major authors rather than on such questions as how these works were produced and who read them. In *Roman Literary Culture*, Elaine Fantham fills that void by examining the changing social and historical context of literary production in ancient Rome and its empire.

Fantham's first edition discussed the habits of Roman readers and developments in their means of access to literature, from booksellers and copyists to pirated publications and libraries. She examines the issues of patronage and the utility of literature and shows how the constraints of the physical object itself—the ancient "book"—influenced the practice of both reading and writing. She also explores the ways in which ancient criticism and critical attitudes reflected cultural assumptions of the time.

In this second edition, Fantham expands the scope of her study. In the new first chapter, she examines the beginning of Roman literature—more than a century before the critical studies of Cicero and Varro. She discusses broader entertainment culture, which consisted of live performances of comedy and tragedy as well as oral presentations of the epic. A new final chapter looks at Pagan and Christian literature from the third to fifth centuries, showing how this period in Roman literature reflected its foundations in the literary culture of the late republic and Augustan age. This edition also includes a new preface and an updated bibliography.

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