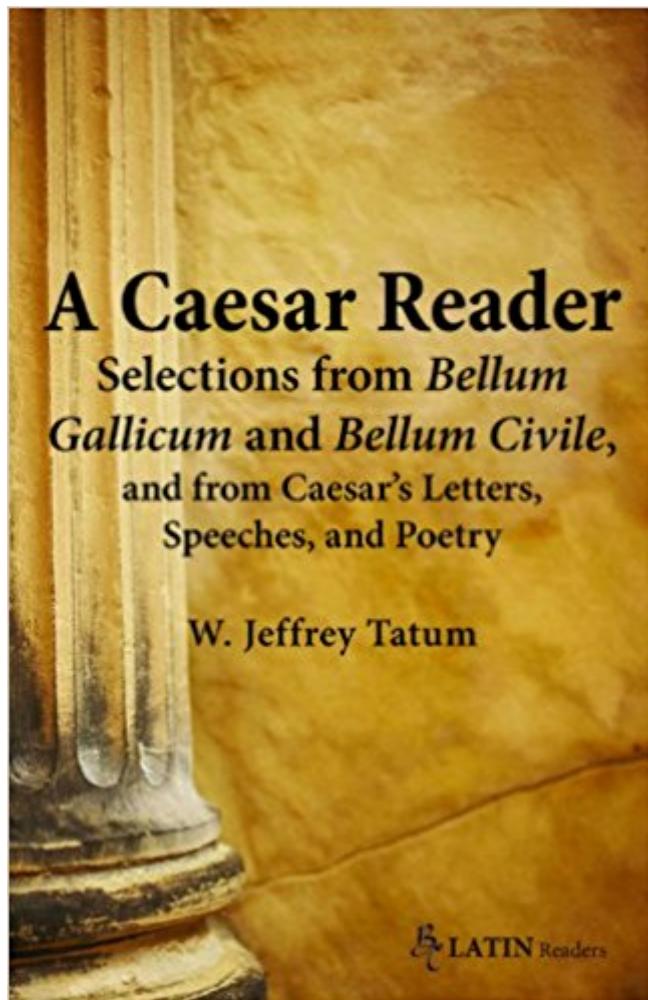


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# **A Caesar Reader: Selections From Bellum Gallicum And Bellum Civile, And From Caesar's Letters, Speeches, And Poetry (Latin Edition) (Latin Readers) (Latin And English Edition)**





## Synopsis

A mature but accessible Latin, a narrative brimming with historical significance and fascination: these were once touted as obvious advantages of reading Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*. A change in sensibilities, however, read Rome's brutal invasion and conquest of northern Europe as problematic, if not disturbing. But questions about the validity of Rome's actions and of Caesar's, especially in his later *Bellum Civile* are precisely what make these commentaries compelling to read and to discuss. Additional selections from Caesar's letters, speeches, and poetry offer fresh perspectives on his stylistic versatility. Tatum's commentary guides readers through it all, pointing up Caesar's significance as a representative of his age, culture, and class, while not skirting issues raised by the intriguingly unsimple mentality that gave us these works. Introduction to Caesar's life, times, works, and style 588 lines of unadapted Latin text selected from Caesar's two historical commentaries as well as from his extant correspondence, oratory, and poetry: *Bellum Gallicum* BOOK 1: 1.1 1.4, 2.1 3.1, 7, 11 12, 34 36; BOOK 2: 19.6 22.2; BOOK 5: 27; BOOK 6: 13 14, 16, 21, 24 *Bellum Civile* BOOK 1: 3 4, 7, 22 23; BOOK 2: 31 32; BOOK 3: 1, 57, 103.2 104.3 Cicero *Ad Atticum* 9.7C (Caesar to Oppius and Cornelius), 10.8B (Caesar to Cicero) Suetonius *Vita Divi Iulii* 6 (fragment of Caesar's funeral oration for his aunt Julia) Suetonius *Vita Terentii* 7 (Caesar's poem on Terence) Notes at the back and complete vocabulary Appendix on Latin prose rhythm Three maps and three illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Caesar seems to be back in vogue these days. Consider Tatum's bibliography, which runs four pages despite restricting itself mostly to works written in the last twenty years. The case could be made that there is not exactly a paucity of texts to use if you are looking to study or teach him. In that context, what does Tatum's volume, one of Bolchazy-Carducci's Latin Reader series, have that other readers lack? The answer, I think, is in the unique passages in the reader and the thorough and subtle cultural and stylistic apparatus for understanding them Tatum provides. Tatum focuses on Caesar's 'extraordinary versatility as a stylist as well as ... his significance as a representative of his age, culture, and class'(xi), and it is true that Tatum draws his selections from a wide variety of Caesar's writings meant to showcase this versatility. It also means that Tatum is prioritizing variety over theme. While many of the selections seem chosen to showcase Caesar's use of narrative as propaganda, some, like Caesar's account of Pompey's death, seem to stand in isolation. Over half of the Latin Tatum selects comes from the *Bellum Gallicum*, and these selections are more or less the ones that you would expect to see. The reader begins with the celebrated *Gallia est omnis divisa*, then moves into the Helvetian campaign. Tatum chooses passages here that highlight Caesar as a propagandist and apologist, and supports this characterization with background essays and notes that provide context for why the Romans feared Celtic tribes and how Caesar took pains to justify his involvement. *Ariovistus* is up next, followed by the *Nervii*'s ambush of Caesar's forces from BG 2.19-22. Tatum, stopping briefly to hear *Ambiorix*'s speech in BG 5.27, ends his tour with ethnographies of the Celts and Germans from BG 7. Tatum's supporting materials here are especially interesting, since he discusses not only Caesar's possible sources but also compares his account with other ethnographies of the area, including Tacitus' *Germania*. Tatum shifts his strategy for the *Bellum Civile*, choosing fewer but longer passages. Tatum's next two selections reveal action in the war through the surrender at Corfinium and Curio's rousing speech before his ultimate defeat in Africa. The last trio of passages show Caesar's *lenitas*, his attempts to persuade aristocrats by speech rather than violence, and finally the scene of Pompey's death. What is most interesting and unusual is Tatum's inclusion of lesser known selections of Caesar's works: two of his letters, a fragment of the funeral oration for his aunt, and a clever poem about his opinion of Terence as a dimidiate Menander (28). I would wager that most students first approach Caesar through a lens formed by popular cultural images of the man as a military genius and dictator; to see Caesar as an author of a wide range of genres is, therefore, bound to be eye-opening. Caesar's poem, found in Suetonius' bibliography of Terence, is sure to delight, and it offers a rare glimpse into his wit and his ability to condemn while praising. Tatum devotes most of the space in the reader to commentary and

grammatical explanations. The reader's best parts are Tatum's deft discussions of the cultural, historical, and stylistic features of each selection. In particular, Tatum's comments often persuade the student to examine motive and style in clever and interesting ways. He also gives plenty of explanations for culturally-laden terms like *officium* and *hospitium*, or technical terms such as *rogatio*, *fides*, or *ambitus* so that a student can attain a greater degree of understanding of the point of an argument. The intermediate students for whom the series is designed are first beginning to think about how style and word order affect the meaning and presentation of argument, and Tatum devotes much space to this idea. --Thomas J. Howell, Belchertown High School, Belchertown, Mass.

Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers have long been known for their exemplary publishing lists in the field of Latin and Greek language studies curriculum materials. Of special note for the study of Latin are their four volume 'Reader' series, each of which is authored by academic experts in the language and in their ability to craft curriculum materials that are thoroughly 'student friendly'. Four volumes that should be a part of every personal, professional, and academic library Latin Studies reference collection includes: *A Caesar Reader: Selections from Bellum Gallicum and Bellum Civile, and from Caesar's Letters, Speeches, and Poetry* (9780865166967, \$19.00) by W. Jeffrey Tatum, Ronnie Ancona and Laurie Haight Keenan; *A Suetonius Reader: Selections from the Lives of the Caesars and the Life of Horace* (9780865167162, \$19.00) by Josiah Osgood; *A Lucan Reader: Selections from Civil War* (9780865166615, \$19.00) by Susanna Braund; and *A Roman Verse Satire Reader: Selections from Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal* (9780865166851, \$19.00) by Catherine Keane. Drawing from classic works of antiquity, each of these four volumes are invaluable, inexpensive, and strongly recommended contributions to the growing body of Latin Language instruction materials suitable as supplemental texts for classroom use, as well as individual studies curriculums. --James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief, Midwest Book Review

W. Jeffrey Tatum is Professor of Classics at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He is the author of *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher* (University of North Carolina, 1999) and *Always I am Caesar* (Blackwell, 2008), as well as articles and book chapters on Roman history and Latin literature.

Caesar is Caesar. What makes this book great is Tatum's commentary. It's really helpful in the beginning books and as you progress, the commentary gives you less and less "translate thus" and more "this is a subordinate clause," which is nice because it shows your knowledge base is (should be) growing.

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