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in Latin Literature and Roman History**

**Confini geografici, spazi liminali e propaganda politica nella poesia latina di età imperiale:
qualche esempio dalle *Silvae* di Stazio**

Stat. *Silv.* 4.1

**SEPTIMUS DECIMUS CONSULATUS
IMP. AUG. GERMANICI**

Laeta bis octonis accedit purpura fastis
Caesaris, insignemque aperit Germanicus annum
atque oritur cum sole novo, cum grandibus astris,
clarius ipse nitens et primo maior Eoo.
exsulent **leges Latiae**, gaudete, curules, 5
et **septemgemino** iactantior aethera pulset
Roma iugo, plusque ante alias Evandrius arces
collis ovet. subiere novi Palatia fasces
et redit en! bis senus honos, precibusque receptis
curia **Caesareum** gaudet vicisse **pudorem**. 10
ipse etiam immensi reparator maximus aevi
attollit vultus et utroque a limine grates
Ianus agit. quem tu vicina Pace ligatum
omnia iussisti componere bella novique 15
in leges iurare fori. levat ecce supinas
hinc atque inde manus geminaque haec voce profatur:
“Salve, magne parens mundi, qui saecula mecum
instaurare paras! talem te cernere semper
mense meo tua Roma cupit; sic tempora nasci, 20
sic annos intrare decet. da gaudia fastis
continua; hos umeros multo sinus ambiat ostro
et properata tuae manibus praetexta Minervae.
aspicis ut templis alius nitor, altior aris
ignis et ipsa meae tepeant tibi sidera brumae
moribus aequa tuis? gaudent turmaeque tribusque 25
purpureique patres, lucemque a consule ducit
omnis honos. quid tale, precor, prior annus habebat?
dic age, Roma potens, et mecum, longa Vetustas,
dinumera fastos nec parva exempla recense,
sed quae sola meus dignetur vincere Caesar. 30
ter Latio<s> deciesque tulit labentibus annis
Augustus fasces, sed coepit sero mereri;
tu iuvenis praegressus avos. et quanta recusas,
quanta vetas! flectere tamen precibusque senatus
promittes hunc saepe diem. manet insuper ordo 35
longior, et totidem felix tibi **Roma** curules
terque quaterque dabit. mecum altera saecula condes
et tibi longaevi renovabitur ara Tarenti.
mille tropaea feres; tantum permitte triumphos.
restat **Bactra** novis, restat **Babylona** tributis 40
frenari, nondum <in> gremio Iovis **Indica laurus**

**THE SEVENTEENTH CONSULSHIP OF
EMPEROR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS**

Joyfully does Caesar's purple join the twice eight entries in the Calendar and Germanicus inaugurate a banner year. He rises with the new sun and the stars in their grandeur, himself shining more brilliantly than they, greater than Eous. Let **Latium's laws** exult, rejoice, ye curule chairs, and more proudly let **Rome** knock at the sky with her **Seven Hills**; above all the other summits let Evander's hill triumph. New rods have entered the Palace, and see, the twelvefold honor returns. Its prayers heard, the Senate House rejoices to have vanquished **Caesar's modesty**. Janus himself, greatest renewer of measureless time, raises his head and gives thanks from either threshold; you have tied his hands with his neighbor Peace and bidden him lay aside all warfare and swear fealty to the laws of the new Forum. See, he raises upturned hands on this side and on that, and thus with his two voices speaks: "Hail, great Father of the world, who make ready with me to renew the ages! Your Rome desires ever to see you thus in my month: thus, 'tis meet that times be born, thus that the years make entrance. Give joys continual to the Calendar. Let the fold surround these your shoulders with plenteous purple, and the bordered gown from your own Minerva's hastening hands. See you how a new gleam is in the temples, how the flame mounts higher on the altars, and how the very stars of my midwinter grow warm for you, matching your manners? Knights and tribes and purple-clad Fathers rejoice, every office draws luster from our Consul. Did any former year, I pray you, have the like? Come, tell me, mighty Rome, and long Antiquity, count with me the annals, nor rehearse petty examples but only those that my Caesar would deign to surpass. Thrice and ten times as the years rolled by did Augustus bear the Latian rods, but 'twas long before he began to deserve them: you were young when you outdid grandsires. And how much you refuse, how much you forbid! Yet you will be prevailed upon and will often promise this day to the Senate's prayers. A longer series remains beyond, and thrice and four times shall fortunate **Rome** bestow as many curule chairs upon you. With me you shall found a second century and for you the altar of ancient Tarentus shall be renewed. You shall bear a thousand trophies, only permit the triumphs. **Bactra and Babylon** have still to be curbed with new tributes, not yet are **Indian laurels** <in> Jove's bosom,

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Stat. *Silv.* 4.2

Stat. *Silv.* 4.2

EUCHARISTICON AD IMP.
AUG. GERM. DOMITIANUM

THANKSGIVING TO EMPEROR
AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS DOMITIANUS

Regia **Sidoniae** convivio laudat **Elissae**
qui magnum Aenean **Laurentibus** intulit **arvis**,
Alcinoique dapes mansuro carmine monstrat
aequore qui multo reducem consumpsit Ulixem:
ast ego, cui sacrae Caesar nova gaudia cenae
nunc primijm dominamque dedit contingere mensam,
qua celebrem mea vota lyra, quas solvere grates
sufficiam? non, si pariter mihi vertice laeto
nectat adoratas et **Smyrna et Mantua** lauros,
digna loquar. medius videor **discumbere in astris**
cum love et **Iliaca** porrectum sumere **dextra**
immortale merum. steriles transmissimus annos;
haec aevi mihi prima dies, hic limina vitae.
tene ego, **regnator terrarum orbisque subacti**
magne parens, te, **spes hominum**, te, cura deorum,
cerno iacens? datur haec iuxta, datur ora tueri
vina inter mensasque, et non assurgere fas est?
Tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis,
sed quantae superos caelumque Atlante remisso
sustentare queant. stupet hoc **vicina Tonantis**
regia, teque pari laetantur sede locatum
numina (nec magnum properes escendere caelum).
tanta patet moles effusique impetus aulae
liberior campi multumque amplexus operti
aetheros et tantum domino minor; ille penates
implet et ingenti genio gravat. <si>mul atra Syene
et Chios et glaucae certantia Doridi saxa
Lunaque portandis tantum suffecta columnis.
longa supra species: fessis vix culmina prenda
visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli.
hic cum Romuleos proceres trabeataque Caesar
agmina mille simul iussit discumbere mensis,
ipsa sinus accincta Ceres Bacchusque laborat
sufficere. aetherii felix sic orbita fluxit
Triptolemi, sic uvifero sub palmite nudos
umbravit colles et sobria rura Lyaeus.
Sed mihi **non epulas Indisque** innixa **columnis**
robora Maurorum famulasque ex ordine turmas,
ipsum, ipsum cupido tantum spectare vacavit,
tranquillum vultus et **maiestate serena**
mulcentem radios summittentemque modeste
fortuna vexilla suae; tamen ore nitebat
dissimulatus honos. talem quoque barbarus hostis

He that brought great Aeneas to **the fields of Laurentum**
extols the royal feast of **Sidonian Elissa**, and he that wore out
returning Ulysses with much seafaring portrays Alcinoos'
repast in immortal verse. But I, now that for the first time
Caesar has granted me novel joy of his sacred banquet, granted
me to attain to his imperial board, with what lyre am I to
celebrate my answered prayers, what thanks shall I avail to
render? Not though **Smyrna and Mantua** both were to bind
holy laurel on my happy head should I find fitting utterance.
Meseems **I recline with Jupiter among the stars** and take
immortal liquor proffered by **Ilian hand**. Barren are the years
behind me. This is the first day of my span, here is the
threshold of my life. Do I behold you as I recline, **sovereign**
of the lands, great parent of a world subdued, you, **hope of**
mankind, you, **care of the gods**? Is it granted me indeed to
gaze at this face from nearby amid wine and tables, and lawful
for me not to rise? An august edifice, vast, magnificent not with
a hundred columns but as many as might support heaven and
the High Ones were Atlas let go. **The Thunderer'**
neighboring palace views it amazed, the deities rejoice to see
you established in a residence equal to their own (nor hasten
you to ascend the great sky!); so wide the pile, such the thrust
of the hall, freer than a spreading plain, embracing much of
heaven within its shelter, and lesser only than its master; he
fills the household and weighs it down with his mighty being.
Here contend **the mountains of Libya and the gleaming**
stone of Ilium, dark Syene too and Chios, and rocks to rival
the gray-green sea, and Luna, substituted only to support the
columns. Far aloft extends the view; your weary eyes could
scarce attain the roof, you would think it the gilded ceiling of
heaven. When Caesar bade Romulus' magnates and the
columns of robed Knights recline here together at a thousand
tables, Ceres herself with her dress girt up and Bacchus toil to
supply their wants. So flowed the bounteous path of sky-borne
Triptolemus; so Lyaeus shaded bare hills and sober fields
under his clustered vines. But not for **the viands or the**
Moorish wood resting on **Indian columns** or the ordered
troops of servants had my eager gaze the time; for him, only
him—calm of visage, softening its radiance **with serene**
majesty, modestly lowering the banner of his fortune; yet the
hidden splendor shone in his face. Even thus would a barbarian
enemy

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posset et ignotae conspectum agnoscere gentes. 45
non aliter **gelida Rhodopes in valle** recumbit
dimissis Gradivus equis; sic lubrica point
membra **Therapnaea** resolutus **gymnade** Pollux,
sic iacet **ad Gangen Indis ululantibus** Euan, 50
sic gravis Alcides post horrida iussa reversus
gaudebat strato latus acclinare leoni.
parva loquor necdum aequo tuos, Germanice, visus:
talis, ubi Oceani finem **mensasque** revisit
Aethiopum sacros diffusus nectare vultus 55
dux superum secreta iubet dare carmina Musas
et **Pallenaos** Phoebum laudare **triumphos**.
Di tibi (namque animas saepe exaudire minores
dicuntur) patriae bis terque exire senectae
annuerint fines. rata numina miseris astris 60
templaque des habitesque domos. saepe annua pandas
limina, saepe novo Ianum lictore salutes,
saepe coronatis iteres quinquennia lustris.
qua mihi felices epulas mensaeque dedisti
sacra tuae, talis longo post tempore venit
lux mihi, **Troianae** qualis **sub collibus Albae**, 65
cum modo **Germanas acies**, modo **Daca** sonantem
proelia Palladio tua me manus induit auro.

and races unknown have recognized him had they seen him.
Not otherwise does Gradivus recline **in Rhodope's chill valley**, horses dismissed; so Pollux lays down his slippery limbs, relaxing **from Therapne's wrestling bout**, so lies Euan **by Ganges, as Indians howl**, so ponderous Alcides, returning from a grim behest, was fain to lean his flank against the outspread lion. I speak of little things, nor yet, Germanicus, do I match your aspect. So looks **the leader of the High Ones** when he revisits Ocean's limits and **the banquets of the Ethiopians**, his sacred countenance diffused with nectar, and bids the Muses sing secret songs and Phoebus laud **Pallene's triumphs**.

May the gods (for 'tis said they often give ear to lesser souls) grant that you pass twice and thrice the limits of your father's eld. May you send established deities skyward, give temples—and live in your home. Often may you throw open the yearly threshold, often greet Janus with new lictors, often repeat the quinquennial festival with wreathed lustrations. The day you gave me the auspicious banquet and the rites of your table, such it came to me as that day long ago when **under Trojan Alba's hills** your hand invested me with Pallas' gold as I sang **now of German battles, now of Dacian**.

[See Courtney 1992, pp. 90-92]

[Transl. in Shackleton Bailey 2015, pp. 233; 235; 237; 239]

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Stat. *Silv.* 4.3

VIA DOMITIANA

Quis duri silicis gravisque ferri
immanis sonus aequori propinquum
saxosae latus **Appiae** replevit?
certe non **Libycae** sonant **catervae**
nec dux advena peierante bello 5
Campanos quatit inquietus **agros**
nec frangit vada montibusque caesis
inducit Nero sordidas paludes,
sed qui limina bellicosa Iani 10
iustis legibus et foro coronat,
quis castae Cereri diu negata
reddit iugera sobriasque terras,
quis fortem vetat interire sexum
et censor prohibet mares adultos
pulchrae supplicium timere formae; 15
qui reddit **Capitolio** Tonantem
et Pacem propria domo reponit,
qui genti patriae futura semper
sancit limina **Flaviumque caelum**, 20
hic segnes populi vias gravatus
et campos iter omne detinentes
longos eximit ambitus novoque
iniectu solidat graves harenas,
gaudens **Euboicae domum Sibyllae**
Gauranosque sinus et aestuantes 25
septem montibus admovere **Baias**.
Hic quondam piger axe vectus uno
nutabat cruce pendula viator
sorbebatque rotas maligna tellus
et plebs in mediis Latina campis 30
horrebat mala navigationis;
nec cursus agiles, sed impeditum
tardabant iter orbitae tenaces,
dum pondus nimium querens sub alta
repit languida quadrupes statera. 35
at nunc quae solidum diem terebat
horarum via facta vix duarum.
non tensae volucrum per astra pennae
nec velocius ibitis carinae.
Hic primus labor incohare sulcos 40
et rescindere limites et alto

Stat. *Silv.* 4.3

THE DOMITIAN WAY

What monstrous sound of hard flint and heavy iron
has filled **paved Appia** on the side that borders the
sea? For sure 'tis not the sound of **Libyan**
squadrons, neither does a restless foreign captain
shake **Campania's fields** in perfidious warfare.
Nero is not breaching the waters and cleaving the
mountains as he brings in murky swamps: but he
who girdles Janus' warlike threshold with just laws
and a Forum, laws by which he restores to chaste
Ceres acres long denied her, sober fields, by which
as Censor he forbids strong sex to perish and stops
grown males from fearing the punishment of fair
form; he who restores the Thunderer to **the Capitol**
and puts Peace back in her own house, who
consecrates an everlasting dwelling and **a Flavian**
sky to his father's race: he it is who, impatient of
routes that retard the people and plains that check
their every journey, eliminates long distances and
with new paving makes solid the clinging sands,
glad to bring **the home of Euboea's Sibyl** and **the**
fields of Gaurus and steaming Baiae closer to the
Seven Hills. Here once the tardy traveler borne on
a single axle would sway on a pendulous pole as
the malignant earth sucked in his wheels, and the
Latian folk feared the woes of navigation in the
midst of the plain. No nimble runs; sticky ruts
slowed the hampered journey, while the fainting
beasts crawled beneath their high yoke, grumbling
at too heavy a load. But now the route that used to
wear out a solid day barely takes two hours. The
stretched wings of birds flying through the stars
will go no faster, nor ships either. The first task
here was to start on furrows and cut out borders and
hollow out the earth far down

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egestu penitus cavare terras;
mox haustas aliter replere fossas
et summo gremium parare dorso,
ne nutent sola, ne maligna sedes
45 <d>et pressis dubium cubile saxis;
tunc umbonibus hinc et hinc coactis
et crebris iter alligare gomfis.
o quantae pariter manus laborant!
hi caedunt nemus exuuntque montes,
50 hi ferro scolopas trabesque levant,
illi saxa ligant opusque texunt
cocto pulvere sordidoque tofo,
hi siccant bibulas manu lacunas
et longe fluvios agunt minores.
55 hae possent et **Athon** cavare dextrae
et **maestum pelagus gementis Helles**
intercludere ponte non natanti;
his parens, nisi di viam vetarent,
Inous freta miscuisset **Isthmos**.
60 Fervent litora mobilesque silvae.
it longus medias fragor per urbes
atque echo simul hinc et inde fractam
Gauro Massicus uvifer remittit.
65 miratur sonitum quieta **Cyme**
et **Literna palus** pigerque **Safon**.
At flavum caput umidumque late
crinem mollibus impeditus ulvis
Vulturnus levat ora, maximoque
70 pontis Caesarei reclinis arcu
raucis talia faucibus redundat:
“Camporum bone conditor meorum,
qui me, vallibus aviis refusum
et ripas habitare nescientem,
75 recti legibus alvei ligasti,
en nunc ille ego turbidus minaxque,
vix passus dubias prius carinas,
iam pontem fero perviusque calcor!
qui terras rapere et rotare silvas
80 assueram, (pudet) amnis esse coepi.
sed grates ago servitusque tanti est
quod sub te duce, te iubente, cessi,
quod tu maximus arbiter meaeque
victor perpetuus legere ripae.
85 et nunc limite me colis beato
nec sordere sinis malumque late
deterges sterilis soli pudorem,

with a deep excavation. Next, to fill the trenches they dug with other material and prepare a basin for the raised spine, so that the foundations do not wobble nor a niggardly bottom offer a treacherous bed for the packed stones. After that, to knit the road with blocks close set on either side and with frequent wedges. Oh, how many hands work in unison! Some fell the forest and strip the mountains, some with iron smooth stakes and beams; others bind stones together, weaving the work with baked sand and grimy tufa; others toil to dry up thirsty puddles and lead off lesser streams. These hands could have hollowed out **Athos** and separated **lamenting Helle's mournful sea** with a bridge that did not float. To these obedient, **Ino's isthmus** might have mingled seas did the gods not forbid passage. The shore and waving woods are astir. The lengthy din travels through the towns between and grapy **Massicus** at once sends back to **Gaurus** the echo broken at either end. Quiet **Cyme** wonders at the noise, and **the Linternian marsh** and sluggish **Savo**. But **Vulturnus** raises his face, his yellow head and mop of watery hair tangled with soft sedge. Leaning against the mighty arch of Caesar's bridge, he pours from his hoarse throat such words as these: “Kind orderer of my plains, who bound me in the law of a straight channel when I spread over distant valleys nor knew to keep my limits, see, now I, the turbulent bully, that in time past barely tolerated imperiled barks, I bear a bridge and am tramped by crossing feet. I that was wont to carry off land and whirl woods, begin (ah, shame!) to be a river. But I give you thanks and my servitude is worthwhile because I have yielded under your guidance at your command, and because men shall ever read of you as supreme arbiter and conqueror of my bank. And now you tend me with a copious channel nor let me lie in squalor, and broadly wipe away the sorry shame of barren soil,

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ne me pulvereum gravemque caeno
Tyrrheni sinus obluat profundi
(qualis **Cinyphius** tacente ripa 90
Poenos Bagrada serpit inter **agros**),
sed talis ferar ut nitente cursu
tranquillum mare **proximumque** possim
puro gurgite provocare **Lirim**.”
Haec amnis, pariterque se levarat 95
ingenti plaga marmorata dorso.
huius ianua prosperumque limen
arcus, belligeri ducis tropaeis
et **totis Ligurum** nitens **metallis**,
quantus nubila qui coronat imbri. 100
illic flectit iter citus viator,
illic **Appia** se dolet relinqui.
tunc velocior acriorque cursus,
tunc ipsos iuvat impetus iugales,
ceu fessis ubi remigum lacertis 105
primae carbasa ventilatis aerae.
ergo omnes, age, quae sub axe primo
Romani colitis fidem parentis
prono limite commeate gentes,
Eoae, citius venite, laurus: 110
nil obstat cupidis, nihil moratur.
qui primo **Tiberim** reliquit ortu
primo vespere naviget **Lucrinum**.
Sed quam fine viae recentis imo,
qua monstrat **veteres** Apollo **Cumas**, 115
albam crinibus infulusque cerno?
visu fallimur, an sacris ab antris
profert **Chalcidicas** Sibylla **laurus**?
cedamus; chely, iam repone cantus:
vates sanctior incipit, tacendum est. 120
en et colla rotat novisque late
bacchatur spatiis viamque replet!
tunc sic virgineo profatur ore:
“Dicebam: ‘veniet (manete campi
atque amnis), veniet favente caelo, 125
qui foedum nemus et putres harenas
celsis pontibus et via levabit.’
en **hic est deus**, **hunc iubet beatis**
pro se Iuppiter imperare terris,
quo non dignior has subit habenas 130
ex quo me duce praescios Averni
Aeneas avida futura quaerens
lucos et penetravit et reliquit.

so that **the gulf of the Tyrrhene sea** does not wash
against my sandy, mud-heavy current, even as
Cinyphian Bagrada glides by his silent banks
amid **Punic fields**, but I so flow that I can challenge
the smooth sea with my shining course and
neighboring Liris with my limpid stream.” Thus
the river; and as he spoke a marbled stretch of road
had risen in a great spine. Its doorway and
auspicious threshold was an arch, gleaming with
the warrior leader’s trophies and **all Liguria’s**
quarries, large as the bow that crowns the clouds
with rain. There the swift traveler makes a turn,
there **Appia** grieves to find herself abandoned.
Then quicker and livelier grows the pace and the
beasts themselves enjoy the rush, as when rowers’
arms are weary and a first breeze fans the sails.
Come therefore, all you peoples that under eastern
sky maintain allegiance to the Roman Father, flock
down the easy road; laurels of the Orient, come
faster. Nothing stands in the way, nothing delays
your eager advent. Let him that left **Tiber** at
daybreak sail the **Lucrine** at earliest eve. But who
is this that I see at the furthest end of the new road,
where Apollo points to **ancient Cumae**? Her hair
and fillets are white. Do my eyes deceive me, or
does the Sybil bring **Chalcidian laurels** forth from
her sacred cave? Let us retire. Lyre, now put aside
your song. A holier bard begins, we must be silent.
See! She whirls her neck and wanders at large over
the new spaces, filling the road. Then thus she
speaks with virgin lips: “I said it: ‘He will come.
Fields and river, wait! He will come by heaven’s
favor, he that shall raise the foul forest and
powdery sand with lofty bridge and causeway.’
See! **He is a god, him Jupiter commands to rule**
the happy earth in his stead. None worthier has
held these reins since Aeneas with me to guide both
entered and left Avernus’ prescient grove, eager to
learn the future.

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hic paci bonus, hic timendus armis,		
hic si flammigeros teneret axes	136	
Natura melior potentiorque,	135	
largis, India , nubibus maderes,		
undaret Libye , teperet Haemus .		
“Salve, dux hominum et parens deorum,		
provisum mihi conditumque numen!	140	
nec iam putribus evoluta chartis		
sollemni prece Quindecimvirosum		
perlustra mea dicta, sed canentem		
ipsam comminus, ut mereris, audi.		
vidi quam seriem virentis aevi	145	
pronectant tibi candidae Sorores.		
magnus te manet ordo saeculorum;		
natis longior abnepotibusque		
annos perpetua gerēs iuventa		
quos fertur placidos adisse Nestor,	150	
quos Tithonia computat senectus,		
et quantos ego Delium poposci.		
iuravit tibi iam nivalis Arctus ;		
nunc magnos Oriens dabit triumphos.		
ibis qua vagus Hercules et Euhan	155	
ultra sidera flammeumque solem		
et Nili caput et nives Atlantis ,		
et laudum cumulo beatus omni		
scandes belliger abnuesque currus,		
donec Troicus ignis et renatae	160	
Tarpeius pater intonabit aulae,		
haec donec via te regente terras		
annosa magis Appia senescat.”		
		He is friend to peace, formidable in arms. If he had the flaming sky in his keeping, better and mightier than Nature, India would be damp with generous clouds, Libya watered, Haemus warm. “Hail, leader of men and parent of gods, deity by me foreseen and placed on record! Do not now scan my words unrolled on crumbling sheets to the ritual prayers of the Fifteen; but listen to me face to face as I sing, as you deserve. I have seen the procession of slow time that the white-clad Sisters weave for you. A great chain of centuries awaits you. Longer lived than your sons and great-great-grandsons, in perpetual youth you shall spend such tranquil years as Nestor is said to have attained, such as Tithonus’ age computes, and as many as I asked of the Delian. Already the snowy north has sworn you fealty; now the east shall give you great triumphs. You shall go where Hercules and Euhan wandered, beyond stars and flaming sun and Nile’s fount and Atlas’ snows . Warrior blessed with every pile of glory, you shall ascend chariots and refuse them, so long as Trojan fire endures and the Tarpeian Father thunders in his renaescent hall, until this road grows older than ancient Appia, while you rule the earth.”
		[Transl. in Shackleton Bailey 2015, pp. 239; 241; 243; 245; 247; 249; 251]

[See Courtney 1992, pp. 92-98]

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