

The chief Roman tragic writer whose plays have survived is Seneca (c. 4 B.C.E.-65 C.E.). Though there is no absolute proof of his identity, it is generally believed that he is the Roman writer by that name who served as tutor to the emperor Nero. Seneca's life was somewhat contradictory. As a writer, he espoused Stoicism, a philosophy of moderation and calm acceptance of whatever happens. In his personal life, though, he was an epicure and something of a voluptuary, enjoying the pleasures of

### SENECA (LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA)

References to only a few Roman tragic playwrights survive. They include Quintus Ennius (239-169 B.C.E.), Marcus Pacuvius (c. 220-130 B.C.E.), and Lucius Accius (170-c. 86 B.C.E.). Their work appears to have been well regarded when it first appeared, but since no plays survive, it may be assumed that they fell out of favor. Many scholars believe that tragedies written after the first century B.C.E. were not meant for large public performances, because Roman society became much more interested in spectacular popular entertainments. Just as the comedies were categorized by their subject matter, so were the tragedies. *Fabula crepidata* were adapted from Greek works, whereas *fabula praetexta* presented Roman story lines. The only surviving example of the latter form is *Oedipia*; its authorship is unknown, but it was probably written after the death of the Roman era's most notable tragic playwright, Seneca.

### ROMAN TRAGEDY

We have no idea what happened to Roman comedy after Terence's death; no works survive from that period. We assume, however, that because no plays have been preserved, there was a decline in the quality of comedies.

Latin name, it frequently denoted a person from Libya. This interpretation has become more prominent in recent years, as historians try to identify Afrocentric rather than Eurocentric origins of cultural achievements. (An Afrocentric approach to history suggests that scholars explore the African origins of many accomplishments usually credited to European cultures.)

\*Twayne, Boston, Mass., 1985. Ibid., p. 6.  
interesting as the question may be, not sources suggests an answer."  
theatre is not easily resolved. As f