united with that of Tcherven (Rustchuk). It was one of the most important towns of Moesia Inferior and was successively the headquarters of the legio I. (Italica) and the legio XI. (Claudia). It was defended by the Bulgarian tsar Simeon against the Magyars and Greeks in 893. In 967 it was captured by the Russian prince Sviatoslav, whom the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus Phocas had summoned to his assistance. In 971 Sviatoslav, after a three months’ heroic defence, surrendered the town to the Byzantines, who had meanwhile become his enemies. In 1388 it was captured by the Turks under Ali Pasha, the grand vizier of the sultan Murad. A few years later it seems to have been in the possession of the Walachian prince Mircea, but after bis defeat by Mahommed I. in 1416 it passed finally into the hands of the Turks. Silistria flourished under Ottoman rule; Hajji Khalifa describes it as the most important of all the Danu- bian towns; a Greek metropolitan was installed here with five bishops under his control and a settlement of Ragusan merchants kept alive its commercial interests. In 1810 the town was surrendered to the Russians under Kamenskiy, who destroyed its fortifications before they withdrew, but they were rebuilt by foreign engineers, and in 1828-1829 were strong enough to offer a serious resistance to the Russians under Diebich, who captured the town with the loss of 3000 men. At that date the population including the garrison was 24,000, but in 1837 it was only about 4000. The town was held in pledge by the Russians for the pay­ment of a war indemnity (1829-1836). During the campaign of 1854 it was successfully defended by General Krach against the Russians under Paskievich; the circuit of its defences had been strengthened before this time by the outlying fortresses Medjid-tabia (built by English engineers) and Arab-tabia. It was again invested by the Russians in 1877, and on the con­clusion of peace was evacuated by the Turks. (J. D. B.)

**SILIUS ITALICUS,** in full Titus Catius Silius Italicus (a.d. 25 or 26-101), Latin epic poet. His birthplace is unknown. From his cognomen Italicus the conclusion has been drawn that he came from the town of Italica in Spain; but Latin usage would in that case have demanded the form *Italicensis,* and it is highly improbable that Martial would have failed to name him among the literary celebrities of Spain in the latter half of the 1st century. The conjecture that Silius derived from Italica, the capital of the Italian confederation during the Social War, is open to still stronger objection. Most, likely some ancestor of the poet acquired the title “ Italicus ” from having been a member of one of the corporations of “Italici” who are often mentioned in inscriptions from Sicily and else­where. In early life Silius was a renowned forensic orator, later a safe and cautious politician, without ability or ambition enough to be legitimately obnoxious to the cruel rulers under whom he lived. But mediocrity was hardly an efficient protec­tion against the murderous whims of Nero, and Silius was generally believed to have secured at once his own safety and his promotion to the consulship by prostituting his oratorical powers in the judicial farces which often ushered in the doom of the emperor’s victims. He was consul in the year of Nero’s death (68), and is mentioned by Tacitus as having been one of two witnesses who were present at the conferences between Vitellius and Flavius Sabinus, the elder brother of Vespasian, when the legions from the East were marching rapidly on the capital. The life of Silius after his consulship is well depicted by the younger Pliny:— “ He conducted himself wisely and courteously as the friend of the luxurious and cruel Vitellius; he won repute by his proconsulship of Asia, and obliterated by the praiseworthy use he made of his leisure the stain he had incurred through his active exertions in former days. In dignity and contentment, avoiding power and therefore hostility, he outlived the Flavian dynasty, keeping to a private station after his governorship of Asia. ” His poem contains only two passages relating to the Flavians; in both Domitian is eulogized as a warrior; in one he figures as a singer whose lyre is sweeter than that of Orpheus himself. Silius was a great student and patron of literature and art, and a passionate collector. Two great Romans of the past, Cicero and Virgil, were by him idealized and veritably worshipped; and he was the happy possessor of their estates at Tusculum and Naples. The later life of Silius was passed on the Campanian shore, hard by the tomb of Virgil, at which he offered the homage of a devotee. He closely emu­lated the lives of his two great heroes: the one he followed in composing epic verse, the other in debating philosophic questions with his friends of like tastes. Among these was Epictetus, who judged him to be the most philosophic spirit among the Romans of his time, and Cornutus, the Stoic, rhetorician and grammarian, who appropriately dedicated to Silius a commentary upon Virgil. Though the verse of Silius is not wrapped in Stoic gloom like that of Lucan, yet Stoicism lends in many places a not ungraceful gravity to his poem. Silius was one of the numerous Romans of the early empire who had the courage of their opinions, and carried into perfect practice the theory of suicide adopted by their school. Stricken by an incurable tumour, he starved himself to death, keeping a cheerful countenance to the end.

Whether Silius committed to writing his philosophic dialogues or not, we cannot say. Chance has preserved to us his epic poem entitled *Punica,* in seventeen books, and comprising some fourteen thousand lines. In choosing the Second Punic War for his subject, Silius had, we know, many predecessors, as he doubtless had many followers. From the time of Naevius onwards every great military struggle in which the Romans had been engaged had found its poet over and over again. In justice to Silius and Lucan, it should be observed that the mythologic poet had a far easier task than the historic. In a well-known passage Petronius pointedly describes the difficulties of the historic theme. A poet, he said, who should take upon him the vast subject of the civil wars would break down beneath the burden unless he were “ full of learning,” since he would have not merely to record facts, which the historians did much better, but must possess an unshackled genius, to which full course must be given by the use of digressions, by bringing divine beings on to the stage, and by giving generally a mytho­logic tinge to the subject. The Latin laws of the historic epic were fixed by Ennius, and were still binding when Claudian wrote. They were never seriously infringed, except by Lucan, who substituted for the *dei ex machina* of his predecessors the vast, dim and imposing Stoic conception of destiny. By pro­tracted application, and being "full of learning,” Silius had acquired excellent recipes for every ingredient that went to the making of the conventional historic epic. Though he is not named by Quintilian, he is probably hinted at in the mention of a class of poets who, as the writer says, "write to show their learning.” To seize the moments in the history, however un­important, which were capable of picturesque treatment; to , pass over all events, however important, which could not readily be rendered into heroics; to stuff out the somewhat modern heroes to something like Homeric proportions; to subject all their movements to the passions and caprices of the Olympians; to ransack the poetry of the past for incidents and similes on which a slightly new face might be put; to foist in by well- worn artifices episodes, however strange to the subject, taken from the mythologic or historic glories of Rome and Greece,— all this Silius knew how to do. He did it all with the languid grace of the inveterate connoisseur, and with a simplicity foreign to his time, which sprang in part from cultivated taste and horror of the venturesome word, and in part from the subdued tone of a life which had come unscathed through the reigns of Caligula, Nero and Domitian. The more threadbare the theme, and the more worn the machinery, the greater the need of genius. Two of the most rigid requirements of the ancient epic were abundant similes and abundant single combats. But all the obvious resemblances between the actions of heroic man and external nature had long been worked out, while for the renova­tion of the single combat little could be done till the hero of the Homeric type was replaced by the medieval knight. Silius, however, had perfect poetic appreciation, with scarce a trace of poetic creativeness. No writer has ever been more correctly and more uniformly judged by contemporaries and by posterity alike. Only the shameless flatterer, Martial, ventured to call