When Caesar was born, probably in 100 B.C., it is doubtful whether anyone at Rome would have expected a son of this secondary branch of the patrician Iulii Caesares to rise to great eminence in the state. The family, to be sure, was very old; it was said to have come to Rome from Alba Longa when King Tullus Hostilius destroyed the city, and the Iulii kept the tradition alive by maintaining associations with Alba and the Alban gods. But, in spite of the family’s antiquity, the nobility of the Iulii, to paraphrase Cicero on another patrician, was better known to men of letters and to historians than it was to the voters. It was not even very well known to men of letters and historians, for the ten or eleven Iulii who reached high office in the fifth and fourth centuries hardly average a line apiece in the six books that Livy devotes to their period – books crowded with vivid stories of patrician families like the Fabii, the Manlii, and the Valerii. [...]