

GROWING UP IN ROME: TEACHER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This selection of prose and verse gives a number of snapshots which show something about growing up in ancient Roman times. As usual with writing in Latin, the voices we hear are those of adult males rather than of children or young people themselves.

Some of the issues about growing up are the same as experienced today – misunderstandings between young and old, adult anxiety about how to treat children and young people, problems with money or sex or free time. Some things, however, which we read in these passages, are affected by specific aspects of Roman culture, such as social class and slavery.

Passage	Type	Age	Writer	Subject Matter and Issues
Cicero Pro Caelio 25,28,30,40	prose excerpt	youth	lawyer and former mentor about defendant	faults of youth
Horace Satire 1.6 lines 71-88	poetry excerpt	childhood	about himself and his father	influence of parents morality, status schooling choice of career
Petronius Satyricon 46	prose excerpt	childhood	fictional character talks about his son	schooling, status choice of career hobbies
Martial Epigrams 5.34	poetry whole work	early childhood (age 6)	poem - owner about himself and slave girl	death slavery
Martial Epigrams 10.62	poetry whole work	schooldays	poem addressed to schoolteacher	schooling
Martial Epigrams 11.39	poetry whole work	cradle to adult	poem addressed to paedagogos	being adult slavery
Juvenal Satire 14 lines 1, 4-14, 31-33	poetry excerpt	childhood (age 7) to youth	writer of satire	faults of youth parental influence
Pliny Letters 9.12	prose whole work	youth	letter to friend about a parent	faults of youth parenting
Tacitus Agricola 4-5	prose excerpt	childhood to youth	writer of biography	parental influence

THE PASSAGES

The passages are given (roughly) in chronological order. There is, of course, no need to study them in this order. They could be explored according to the age of the child or young person involved, or according to subject matter and issues, such as schooling or the influence of parents. Or you could do them according to the difficulty of the text.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S NOTES

The notes on each piece begin with a brief introduction. If the passage is an excerpt some of the context is given. The notes cover language, content, style and literary effects. In poetry elisions are pointed out as they will affect the reading of the text but a reason for the elision is only given if it is obvious. There is a discussion after each set of notes about issues arising and some suggestions.

It is not intended that teachers should feel obliged to pass on all information from the Teachers' Notes to their students; they may choose whatever they think is appropriate.

EXPLORATION OF THE THEME

Students will bring their own experiences and knowledge to this topic. They should be encouraged to explore contemporary attitudes towards growing up and compare them with those in Roman times.

Students might begin to engage with the theme by thinking about which words connected with age and growing up are acceptable to them. Do they mind being called a 'child' or 'kid' or do they prefer 'young person'?

You may like to start your exploration with some music. Fortuitously there is an appropriate [song recently released](#). Listen first to see if you are comfortable with the language! If not, you may prefer [Never Grow Up](#), by Taylor Swift. There are more ideas [here](#).

Some sites which discuss some issues of growing up in modern times are the [Guardian](#), [Wikipedia](#), the [Daily Mail \(1\)](#) and the [Daily Mail \(2\)](#).

Some sites about Roman childhood and growing up:

- a site with lots of links to [poems and pictures of Roman children and young people](#);
- an [article on childhood in Roman times](#) (not wholly accurate);
- a [slideshow on Roman childhood](#).

Further Reading

Tingay and Badcock: *These were the Romans* (Hulton 1972)

James Renshaw: *In Search of the Romans* (BCP 2012)

Alex Butterworth and Ray Laurence *Pompeii: The Living City*, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005)

Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome* (Routledge, 2002)

Beryl Rawson *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

AIMS AND METHODS

Main aim: to enjoy reading and studying literature!

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS	AIMS
understanding what the Latin means	developing reading competence
exploring the issues arising in each passage and the theme of the selection	reconsider themselves and their own society and culture in the light of their consideration of other peoples, societies and cultures separated in space and time.
engaging with the Latin text examining language use interpreting the text analysis and evaluation	develop a critical insight into the way language is used to develop trains of thought, express feelings or to influence people
showing knowledge and understanding by answering questions expressing opinions and feelings creative translation	appreciate critically and make an informed and personal response to the language, literary forms, techniques and qualities of the texts

Understanding the text

This may well be the first experience students have of reading real Latin and some of the features, particularly word order, will be unfamiliar. Sentence length may cause difficulty.

Teachers can help in three ways:

1. Read the Latin text aloud - to emphasise phrasing and stress word groups.
2. Break up complex sentence into constituent parts for comprehension.
3. Leading questions.

Comprehension and Translation

Students should be made aware of the types of question they will need to answer. They need to know that translation is not the main means of assessment and that it is not enough to be able to translate the Latin: they will need to understand the Latin text well enough to choose and quote individual words or phrases to support answers to stylistic questions.

NOTES ON THE PASSAGES

Cicero, *pro Caelio* 25, 28, 30, 44

Introduction

This is not the easiest piece in the selection and unless you want to do the pieces in the order in which they occur in the publication, you might consider leaving this one until nearer the end.

This passage is an amalgam of extracts.

This is a part of a speech for Caelius, the defendant in a trial. In a Roman court the three prosecutors made their speeches first and then the three speakers for the defence. Of these Caelius himself had spoken first, then Crassus and finally Cicero. Crassus had dealt with the accusations about the Alexandrians. So Cicero was free to talk about other things: he chose to refute the seriousness of the charges, to suggest that the prosecution had been too severe, or that it has presented unsubstantiated trivial tittle-tattle, or that the main mover behind the trial was Clodia.

- 1 **familiaris:** the translation 'friend', may be misleading to students, who might need to be told that this is the usual way to refer to another lawyer in a court.
- multa:** the repetition may be to mock Herennius for going on too much in his speech. The fact that Cicero spends time rebutting aspects of Herennius' speech may suggest that he was a good orator and, that as an older man his words about morality had weight and his attack on Caelius' character had been effective. Cicero says that Herennius' speech was met with silence.
- luxurie:** *luxuries/luxuria* was a trait much deplored by many Roman writers. Some liked to think that there had been a time when Romans had been frugal farming people until luxuries had tempted them. The translation 'extravagance' may seem old-fashioned, but it is appropriate for that reason: Cicero is probably quoting the word which Herennius used and he is certainly suggesting that Herennius' ideas are too old-fashioned and too severe.
- 'It is not necessary to believe, merely on Cicero's word, that Herennius' performance was all that solemn and austere. It is much to Cicero's, and Caelius', advantage for the speech to be perceived as such. Creating perceptions is the prime aim of an orator.'
- (H.C. Gotoff, Cicero's Analysis of the Prosecution Speeches in the *Pro Caelio*: An Exercise in Practical Criticism", *Classical Philology* 81 (1986). 126)
- Geffcken makes this comment: 'Cicero strives to make those censorious of Caelius ridiculous, inflexible, out of date.' 'Over-spending' might be a term which young people might relate to more easily. Although Caelius had assumed the *toga virilis* and come of age in that way, he was still *in potestate*, subject to his father who was paterfamilias. After living with Cicero or Crassus, Caelius had rented an apartment and had an allowance of money from his father.
- Current articles on extravagance, overspending etc.:
1. [Telegraph](#), 18th December 2009.
 2. [Street Directory](#) website.

2 **libidine:** This word is used twice in the passage. It can mean any desire or passion, but often has a sexual connotation. Caelius had been specifically accused by the prosecution of sexually molesting other men's wives on their way home from dinner. There had also been a suggestion that he had been too fond of Catiline.

1-2 **luxurie ... libidine ... vitiis ... moribus:** Cicero has put these words in order of diminishing seriousness and precision (in Roman eyes): *vitiis* is a general term for faults and *moribus* is neutral – habits or morals, bad or good. *vitiis iuventutis* – Cicero uses the words *iuventus*, *adulescentia* and *aetas* in this passage to denote youth. (By the way the [Juventus football team](#) was founded by students, hence the name.)

2-3 **castigavit M. Caelium, sicut neminem umquam parens:** although the Latin usage here is different from English, pupils will grasp the sense of this. It is one of those places where they can be encouraged to go for a natural translation. Cicero no doubt hopes that the jury will relate to the idea of a father being unable to scold a son in the way that Herennius did Caelius. Perhaps they will judge Caelius as they would their own son – with forgiveness.

Since his father had handed young Caelius over to Cicero as his pupil, Cicero no doubt had felt a parental responsibility for Caelius. A familiar relationship is revealed in the letters between Cicero and Caelius, especially the ones concerning panthers. Cicero certainly plays on the idea of fatherhood. Cicero's (and Crassus') motive for taking on the defence of Caelius may, of course, have been not only fatherly affection, but expediency – it would be better to have Caelius, now becoming an influential player in Roman politics, obligated to him and on his side. Cicero would also hope for a crushing defeat of the Clodii, particularly the man who had caused Cicero's exile.

Cicero uses a great deal of theatrical reference in the *Pro Caelio*. Like the stock figures in a Roman comedy, Herennius comes over as the Angry Strict Old Man and Caelius as the Adolescent who makes mistakes but not so bad that there can't be a happy ending. Of course Cicero has in mind as well the villains who will be overcome, especially the one he has cast as the Bitter Old Prostitute – Clodia.

3 **multa:** again this word is repeated. (N.B. in the original text this sentence is not so near the former.)

3-4 **de incontinentia intemperantiaque:** two more words for bad behaviour. Both begin with the prefix 'in' suggesting lack of something. The assonance links them.

4 **et vidi ... et audivi:** students may need to be made aware of the use of *et ... et* as meaning 'both ... and'.

civitate: here city will work as a translation but make it clear that Cicero means among Roman citizens, not just at Rome. Some students may relate to the word 'community'. Indeed, as Caelius is on trial for a crime *de vi publica* – violence against public interest i.e. against the community – Cicero must show that Caelius is a worthy member of the community, at least no worse than most – hence the defence that many Roman men have behaved like Caelius when young.

5 **primoribus labris gustavissent:** the first of the two metaphors for taking an initial slight interest in something.

6 **extremis ... digitis attigissent:** the second of the metaphors. Pupils may compare this with 'dip a toe into the water'. The subjunctives may be generic but can better be explained as subjunctives in subordinate clauses in indirect statement, as Cicero is

probably referring to specific individuals or groups of individuals and if he were not using indirect speech he would have used indicative.

ut dicitur: Cicero often adds these words when using a metaphor.

- 8 **graves homines atque illustres:** *gravitas* was considered by Cicero to be a traditional Roman value.

For websites on the continuing importance of *gravitas*, see:

- [World Wide Words](#)
- [Change board](#)
- [Pennington Hennesy](#)
- [New Statesman](#)
- [BM Magazine](#)

For modern leading figures who are known for youthful misdemeanours but who have become good – or possibly just a bit better than they were - you might consider Russell Brand, Nigel Benn, Barack Obama, Dick Cheney and some former members of the Bullingdon Club. Bill Clinton's remark to dismiss accusations about an act in his youth is legendary: '... but I didn't inhale'. See articles by [Spiegel Online](#) and the [Independent](#).

- 9 **severitati tuae:** *severitas* is a quality which Cicero usually praises, but here it suits him to suggest that Herennius has spoken too severely.

non respondebo: praeteritio

- 10 **perfugiis aetatis:** *aetas* was a general word for age, any age or time of life, but was also often used for the period in a boy's life just after he assumed the toga virilis. At the ceremony he gave up the bulla, the amulet which he had worn round the neck as a child. This visible symbol of childhood signified that a boy was not available to sexual advances by older males. A boy who had assumed the toga virilis and was without the bulla was considered especially vulnerable as he had to rely on his own *pudicitia* or concerned adults.

See these [pictures](#) of *toga virilis*, *toga praetexta* and Nero as a child wearing a bulla.

- 11 **tantum peto ...noceant:** pupils may need help with this complex sentence: *quam video esse magnam* describes *invidia*; *huic* is the object of *noceant*; *peccata* and *vitia* are the subjects of *noceant*. For contrast *huic* and *aliorum* are juxtaposed. The pairing of words with similar meanings such as *peccata* and *vitia*, *aetatis* and *temporum* is typical of Cicero's writing.

- 11 **peto:** a word used for a strong formal request in Cicero's letters. See [How to Say Please in Latin](#) – Eleanor Dickey

- 11-12 **aeris alieni:** debt.

For articles on Roman debt, see:

1. [The Debt Crisis in Ancient Rome: Lessons for Today](#)
2. [Personal indebtedness and debt forgiveness in the Roman empire](#)
3. [Debt Deflationary Crisis in the Late Roman Republic](#)

- 12 **petulantiae:** *petulantia* has a wide range of meanings from simple rudeness to boisterous aggression or yobbishness.

petulantiae, libidinum iuventutis: Cicero links these words with youth in *de Senectute*, but stresses that it is better to think of people as individuals, not groups. *ut petulantia, ut libido magis est adolescentium quam senum, nec tamen omnium adolescentium, sed non proborum, sic ista senilis stultitia, quae deliratio appellari solet, senum levium est, non omnium* (Cic Sen 11, 36)

- 13 **aetatis ... vitia:** see note on *aetas* above.
temporum vitia: it may be that every generation of adults looks at the young and considers that the age in which they are growing up is the worst in terms of vice, but it is also true that the times in which Cicero lived were particularly difficult because of political instability: '*o tempora, o mores*'.
- 14 **nulla luxuries reperietur, nulli sumptus, nullum aes alienum, nulla conviviorum ac lustrorum libido:** tetracolon with polyptoton of *nulla/nulli* etc. Cicero declares that Caelius has none of these faults at all – hyperbole.
luxuries: as note above.
sumptus: a more neutral word than *luxuries*.
- 14-15 **aes alienum:** as note above – see links on debt.
- 15 **conviviorum ac lustrorum libido:** *convivium* was a get together, feast or party – a fairly neutral term; *lustrum* was originally a word for a marshy area and then an animal's den, but came to be used for a brothel. The expression 'den of vice' preserves the animal connection in English.
- 16 **hae deliciae, ut vocantur:** Cicero uses the fashionable word for a love affair, but shows that it is not in his normal usage.
- 17 **numquam hunc occupatum impeditumque tenuerunt:** the pairing of *occupatum* and *impeiditum* strengthens Cicero's denial of involvement in these activities by Caelius.

Discussion

Caelius was on trial in 56 BC for a number of offences. Despite what Cicero says in his opening to his speech, most are serious crimes: inciting civil disturbances at Naples; an assault on Alexandrian ambassadors at Puteoli; damage to the property of someone called Palla; stealing gold to pay for the murder of Dio of Alexandria, then attempted poisoning of Clodia; and the attempted murder of Dio. Although the crimes are clearly described, there is dispute amongst scholars about exactly which law(s) Caelius had violated. There is also uncertainty about the reason for the trial being held in the *quaestio de vi*, a court for trials which were serious cases of civil disturbance, such as the trial of Catiline. It was presumably a choice made by the prosecutors. Indeed Cicero argued that it was inappropriate for Caelius.

The political background to the trial concerns a delegation of ambassadors from Alexandria in Egypt, led by Dio. This delegation had come to Italy to ask that the Romans did not help Ptolemy XII Auletes to regain the throne of Egypt. This man had usurped the throne, but he had enraged the people of Alexandria by imposing heavy taxes on them and they had rioted and forced him to leave; he had gone to Rome to ask for help. When the delegation arrived at Naples and Puteoli they had been attacked. Presumably the attack was initiated by Ptolemy, but it was Caelius who was accused of organising public disorder: hence the accusations listed above concerning Naples and Puteoli. Some students may see a modern parallel with conflicting appeals for help to the superpower of the day to settle political unrest in Egypt and other countries. As for the other charges, the identity of Palla is not known nor the nature of the alleged damage to property. The gold which Caelius is accused of taking belonged to Clodia, his ex-girlfriend: the allegation was that Caelius had taken it to bribe slaves to murder Dio.

Students may need to be told that there was no public prosecutor in Roman times. Trials were brought by private individuals and sometimes trials were held because a rival

politician or a family enemy had decided to prosecute someone on trumped up charges for the sake of revenge or to prevent being prosecuted himself. One of the prosecutors of Caelius was Atratinus, the son of a man that Caelius had prosecuted earlier. The man had been acquitted and one reason for a prosecution against Caelius may have been to prevent him making a second trial of that man. Students may also need to know that in Roman trials, although evidence was considered important, much of the speeches consisted of character defamation by the prosecution and rebuttal of this by the defence. Another prosecutor was Clodius, relative of the ex-girlfriend. Cicero spent much of his speech suggesting that she was behind the prosecution motivated by her pique at being rejected by Caelius. We do not have to believe all this. The other prosecutor was Herennius, a friend of Atratinus' father; he is the man mentioned in the passage.

Caelius was the son of a wealthy *eques*. He had been born in Teramo in about 88 BC¹. At the time of the trial he was about 32, but the prosecutors have apparently brought up allegations about Caelius' character, including some bad behaviour in his younger days. Cicero chooses to reply as if all of the bad behaviour was from Caelius' early adolescence: he argues that youthful bad behaviour is commonplace and not so reprehensible. There are two likely reasons for using this from of defence. The first is that it would have been difficult for anyone to deny that Caelius had been rather wild in his youth - he had been involved in the Catiline conspiracy and Catiline was rumoured to have been sexually immoral as well as politically dangerous. A second difficulty for Cicero was that he had himself had a part in Caelius' upbringing. When Caelius was about fifteen, shortly after he had gained the *toga virilis* and come of age, his father had brought him to Rome to study rhetoric under Cicero. Caelius had learned public speaking well and had become a successful lawyer and politician.

Students might want answers to these questions:

1. What did Cicero say next on this subject?

"For by the common consent of all men, some indulgence is given to this age, and nature itself suggests desires to youth; and if they break out without injuring any one else a life, or overturning any one else's house, they are generally accounted enduring and pardonable. But you seemed to me to wish to bring Caelius into some sort of odium by means of the common irregularities into which youth is apt to fall." (Yonge translation)

2. Was Caelius found guilty or innocent? Innocent

3. Was he actually innocent? It is not known

¹ Not 82 BC, as stated on Wikipedia.

4. What happened afterwards to Cicero and Caelius?

55 -51 BC	Caelius became quaestor and then <i>tribunus plebis</i>
51-50 BC	Cicero was made governor of Cilicia. Caelius and Cicero wrote letters.
50 BC	Caelius became curule aedile.
49 BC	Civil war started in Rome. Cicero was on Pompey's side against Julius Caesar. Caelius supported Caesar.
48 BC	Caelius proposed laws to abolish debt. There were riots in the streets of Rome and Caelius was denied access to the senate. He left Rome, joined a rebellion against Caesar and was killed. This was 8 years after the speech.
47 BC	Julius Caesar defeated all his opponents. Cicero was forgiven. Cicero kept out of politics for a while.
44 BC	Julius Caesar was murdered. Mark Antony took power. Cicero delivered speeches against Mark Antony.
43 BC	Cicero was murdered on the orders of Mark Antony.

Pupils may need help to see what lines of defence Cicero has used. Then they can consider whether the same views are prevalent today. Is it just 'boys will be boys'? The message of understanding or forgiveness for the faults of youth and against severity is similar to that in Pliny's Letter 2.9. Pupils can look for similarities in wording. Bear in mind the difference in period.

It may be necessary to warn pupils that Cicero's message is not typical either of him nor the age in which he lived. Cicero is saying what is expedient for defending Caelius.

The relationship between Cicero and Caelius is worth exploring. Are there signs that Cicero feels paternal towards Caelius?

Issues arising include:

- Are there faults peculiar to youth which a person grows out of?
- Are the faults mentioned here ones which might be criticised in the youth of today?

Further Reading

May, James M. Patron and Client, *Father and Son in Cicero's 'Pro Caelio'*. The Classical Journal 90. No. 4. (April–May, 1995): 433–441

[Perseus website](#)

Audio

[iTunes podcast](#)

About the Author

[CSCP website](#)

Introduction

This is an extract from a poem. It is in dactylic hexameter.

The poem 1.6 starts saying that Maecenas does not despise Horace as some people do for being a freedman's son. Maecenas has said that parentage is irrelevant to gaining honour, (*honos/honor*) by which he seems to mean going up the *cursus honorum*, gaining high office in the state. Horace at first deals with the word in this meaning with examples of other people, then talks about himself: he explains how some people have shown resentment against him for two reasons. The first is his being a tribune commanding a Roman legion: he says *ut forsit honorem iure mihi inuideat* - that someone may perhaps rightly resent this honour. The other is that he is a friend of Maecenas: he says that people should not resent that he has Maecenas' friendship because Maecenas only chooses worthy people - *vita et pectore puro*. Horace is thus treating friendship with Maecenas as a kind of honour, one for which the qualification is a good character. Horace describes himself as a generous, clean-living, decent man. It is just after this that our passage comes.

- 1 **pater:** Horace's father was a freedman.
causa fuit pater his: this refers to the fact that Horace's nature is, he says, has only a few slight blemishes (*vitiis*) and he cannot be accused of avarice, meanness or sexual immorality (*mala lustra*²) and he is pure and innocent and that he is loved by his friends.
macro pauper agello: the farm was on Mount Vultur, Apulia. Horace states that the farm was small and his father poor; he does not mean that he was destitute – just that he was not wealthy. He had enough money to send his son to school in the local town. As Horace did not have this farm, it may be presumed that it was confiscated to provide land for veterans at the end of the civil war.
- 2 **Flavi ludum:** at Venusia – Flavius was probably a *litterator*, a teacher of reading, writing and basic arithmetic.
For information about Roman schools, see the [CSCP website](#).
- 3 **magni ... pueri magnis e centurionibus orti:** Venusia was a colony, a town established for ex-soldiers. It had been founded in 262 BC. The centurions and their sons could be *magni* because they are physically large, or they could be *magni* because centurions, even retired centurions, would be considered more important than other soldiers within that community. The sons of these centurions might have looked down on the lowly son of a freedman. On the other hand Horace describes himself as slight (*corporis exegui*) in *Epist.* 1.20.21, so perhaps the boys were bigger than him.
In the greater scheme of Roman status, centurion was not a high rank in the army. Horace himself, as he mentions in this satire, had obtained the much higher rank of tribune.
- 4 **laevo suspensi loculos tabulamque lacerto:** the boys in Venusia carried their own satchels. There are pictures of schoolboys, satchels and writing tablets [here](#).

² For lustrum, see the notes on the Cicero passage line 15 in this document.

- 5 **octonos referentes Idibus aeris:** the boys took the school fees of eight asses to the teacher on the Ides of each month. An alternative reading is *octonos Idibus aera* which would mean that the boys took the fees eight times i.e. on the Ides of eight months of the year which were term time and not on four months which were holidays. Gow rejects this reading on the grounds that Horace's point is that the school was cheap: the teacher charged only eight asses a month.
- 6 **est ausus:** Horace suggests that it took courage to do what his father did - move from settled life on a farm in a small provincial town to foster his aspirations for his son in Rome.
portare: some people have suggested that the word *portare* suggests that Horace was very young at the time, but this should not be taken literally. Horace had probably started school at the usual time aged about seven. It is not clear when the move to Rome took place. Elsewhere Horace describes his school in Rome as being that of a *grammaticus*.
- 7 **artes quas doceat quivis eques atque senator:** an eques or senator would need to know literature and public speaking.
doceat: generic subjunctive. Horace writes as if within the tradition that Roman fathers taught their children themselves.
- 8 **semet prognatos:** *semet* is ablative of separation – descended from themselves. The start of this line is heavily spondaic.
servosque sequentes: like the other schoolboys in Rome, Horace now had slaves accompanying him: usually this consisted of a *capsarius* to carry the satchel and a *paedagogos*, a guard.
- 9 **in magno ut populo:** Gow takes these words to mean *ut fit in magno populo* – as happens in a large population - and meaning that people would see him without knowing who he was. But the words may refer to the large number of slaves accompanying Horace to school – slaves following as in a large retinue. There is an elision *magn(o) ut*.
- 11 **ipse mihi custos incorruptissimus:** Horace's father went with his son as a *paedagogos*, a guard to protect his son. If taken with the plural in the words *servosque sequentes* in line 8, does this mean that his father would walk behind young Horace to school and could then be mistaken for a slave?
The usual *paedagogos* was a slave who might be considered untrustworthy because he would be susceptible to bribery and might abandon his charge in exchange for a reward.
- 12 **quid multa:** a standard expression to put an end to detailed exposition, lit: 'why (say) many (words)?'
- 12-13 **pudicum ...servavit:** Horace makes it clear what his father, as his *custos*, was protecting – he was keeping his son chaste, i.e. safe from sexual predators.
- 13 **qui primus virtutis honos:** *qui* is masculine attracted by the gender of *honos* but it refers to *pudicum servavit* and *quod* could have been used. Students may need help to understand the concepts here. The idea refers back to the beginning of the poem where Horace mentions Maecenas' remark about honour. The addition of the word *virtutis* here with *honos* shows that Horace is thinking less of the idea of *honos* as political office or rank, but as something more akin to respect for his pure character and life, which is the reason that he is acceptable to Maecenas. Horace says in lines 62-64 of this Satire: *magnum hoc ego duco, quod placui tui, qui turpi secernis honestum non*

patre praeclaro, sed vita et pectore puro. The usual slur on a Roman man to discredit his character was to suggest there had been an improper relationship in his early years. It is due to Horace's father that this was prevented. Hence his father's act of keeping him safe was *primus virtutis honos*: it was *primus* in the sense of first and essential and most important; it was an honour in the sense of a duty which his father did for him but also the first rung on the ladder towards *virtus* – a good character - which has in turn led to his rise in society as a friend of Maecenas.

14 **ab omni non solum facto, verum opprobrio quoque turpi:** *turpi* goes with *facto* as well as *opprobrio*. Horace's father kept him safe not only from any action, but also from the shame from rumour of any wrong. In the *Pro Caelio* Cicero says that any good-looking young man was likely to have rumours spread about him. The final syllable of *verum* is elided.

15 **nec timuit sibi ne vitio quis verteret olim si praeco parvas aut, ut fuit ipse, coactor mercedes sequer:** Horace mentions these two occupations as being those for which someone might reproach his father: *parvas ... mercedes* suggests that these were lowly paid occupations, but they were also despised as not being high-status professions. As the *praeco* and *coactor* probably worked on commission, a percentage of the monies collected, their income would depend on their skill and success. In Satire II.2 Horace mentions a *praeco*; called Gallonius who had been criticised by Lucilius for serving a huge expensive fish to his guests. Presumably Gallonius had made enough money from being a *praeco* to afford the fish. Another fabled wealthy *praeco* was Q Granius. Auctioneering was one of the jobs of Caecilius Iucundus, who was like Horace the son of freedman, and he had become relatively wealthy in Pompeii.

A *praeco* was an announcer – at games, auctions, in court, public assemblies. A *coactor* was a collector – of debts, taxes, money paid at auctions – an agent between the payer and payee. Modern equivalents of these jobs could include bankers, brokers, estate agents, announcers.

17 **neque ego essem questus:** although Horace says that he would not have complained, clearly he had at some point decided that he did not want to follow these careers but wanted to make it as a poet if he could. There are two elisions here *nequ(e) eg(o) essem*.

hoc: Gow takes this with *maior* as an ablative of the measure of difference = 'by this much all the more'. But it is possible to see *hoc* as an ablative of cause meaning 'for this reason' or as an accusative of respect.

nunc: now = 'as it is'. Horace means that he had in fact done well for himself, better than he would have been as a *praeco* or *coactor* and he was reasonably well off. After studying at Athens for a while, Horace had joined Brutus' army. When this was defeated and Augustus took power, he forgave Horace. Horace returned to Rome and found that his father was dead and the farm had been confiscated. He found a job in the public treasury. He was, however, writing poetry and becoming friends with other poets. As he explains in this Satire, it was Virgil and Varius, who introduced him to the great patron Maecenas. In 38 BC Horace was well within Maecenas' circle of friends and probably no longer had to worry about money or work at anything except poetry: not long after this he was given his Sabine farm. The caesura in the fifth foot and the two monosyllables give line 17 an unusual rhythm.

Discussion

The first book of the *Satires* was probably written in 35 BC when Horace was aged 30. Horace is writing about himself in this passage. There is no reason to doubt the general truth of what he says about events: it is consistent in most of his works and plausible. We may, however, be sceptical about some of the spin which Horace puts on his account.

In the part of the poem which comes after this, Horace argues that he enjoys his life as it is and does not seek the burdens of wealth or influence. Niall Rudd discusses this poem in the *Satires of Horace* (BCP). He sees it as an attempt by Horace to redefine the concepts of *nobilitas*, *dignitas* and *libertas*.

This passage reveals a lot about the character of Horace and of his father. Horace's father has concern for his son's schooling but low aspirations for his future career and in this respect he can be compared with Echion in Petronius *Satyricon* 46.

The poem is written in a conversational style, but is in a strict metre. About half the lines enjamb and keep the pace fast. Pupils may wonder about Horace's motive in writing this poem and choosing to include this autobiographical material. It helps to see the whole poem for this but pupils can be encouraged to speculate just from the passage.

Issues arising include:

- How much did parenting matter in Roman times and how much does it matter now?
- How important is a good school?
- How much do parental aspirations and influence matter?
- What is success and honour?

With regards to success, some of the recent discussion around the [Woman's Hour Power List](#) may be helpful.

Further Reading

James Gow, *Horace Satires Liber I*, CUP (1901)

See also *Libellus Handbook* pages 92-95 for a discussion of an earlier passage in the poem.

See the CSCP website for information [about the Author](#).

Introduction

This is an extract from a longer work. It is part of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, a work of fiction.

Some sentences are omitted from the passage.

Trimalchio has left the room and some guests have a conversation. Most are freedmen who have made a lot of money. Petronius has shown all of them as very interested in money and judging people in terms of their wealth. They do not speak the Latin of the educated upper classes: they use Graecisms, slang and clichés and make grammatical errors. It is likely that this is an attempt by Petronius to portray the local dialect of Campania as spoken by freedmen and the lower classes.

Echion, the speaker in our passage, is described as a *centonarius*. This used to be thought of as a rag merchant (Lewis and Short) but it is now thought that he was a fireman who used mats to extinguish fires (Oxford Latin Dictionary).

The conversation has included a recent funeral, the price of bread, the state of the town, and local politicians. Then, Echion talks at length about a forthcoming gladiatorial show which is going to cost a fortune to put on. He notices that another guest, a teacher of rhetoric, Agamemnon, looks bored. He remarks that he is not of the same class as them and is laughing at the words of poor people. This is where our passage begins.

You may need to tell your students that some humour is intended in this passage.

- tu, Agamemnon:** Agamemnon is a teacher of rhetoric. Petronius has shown him as speaking conventional Latin and being pedantic about language use. He is sitting at the top table. Echion and the people he is talking to are on a separate table.

prae litteris fatuus es: these words can be interpreted in several ways and it is not clear whether Echion is being deliberately insulting, or is unaware that his words could be taken as an insult. There are several ways to understand the words: mad about books, crazy from too much literature, a fool for learning, dull with bookishness, off your head with all that reading.

As Echion himself has said Agamemnon has not actually said anything in the conversation; that Agamemnon was not like them and was laughing at the way that poor people speak. Echion's assumption presumably reflects his own feeling of inferiority at not having had an education in rhetoric.

Of course the reason may be that Agamemnon has all the learning but can't join in an ordinary dinner conversation. In the first fragment of the *Satyricon*, Encolpius tells Agamemnon:

et ideo ego adolescentulos existimo in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex his, quae in usu habemus, aut audiunt aut vident.

I believe that college makes complete fools of our young men, because they see and hear nothing of ordinary life there (Loeb translation).

Agamemnon in his answer did not disagree with this, but said that it was not the teachers' fault.

The preposition *prae* usually takes the accusative, but Echion uses the ablative – a grammatical error.

- 1-2 **aliquo die te persuadeam ut ad villam nostram venias:** this appears to be a polite invitation to Agamemnon to visit Echion, but the wording is hesitant. Some sentences about the food to be enjoyed on the visit are omitted from the passage here. Echion makes another grammatical slip with the accusative *te* instead of *tibi*.
- 2 **tibi discipulus crescit filius meus:** some people see this as the offer of a job from the culturally poor Echion to the financially poor Agamemnon.
- 2-3 **iam quattuor partes dicit:** one clue about the age of the boy? If he has only just learned the four-times table, it would be some time before the boy reaches the right age for the study of rhetoric which Agamemnon teaches. Does Echion have a misguided view of the boy's educational progress or a lack of knowledge about the stage at which boys learned rhetoric? In Chapter 4 of the *Satyricon*, Agamemnon laments that parents send their sons to learn rhetoric too young and rush children through their studies.
Mary Beard describes the tombstone of a young boy with literary talent, [the son of pushy parents](#).
- 3 **si vixerit:** this sound pessimistic, but perhaps it was just realistic in the days of high infant mortality.
- 3-4 **habebis bonum discipulum ... nam quicquid illi vacat, caput de tabula non tollit:** The boy does not lift his head from the tablet. Echion regards this as diligence and an indication of a good pupil. Echion's son was being educated by tutors at home and did not go to school. Echion is dissatisfied with a couple of the boy's present tutors.
- 4-5 **ingeniosus est, etiam si in aves morbosus est:** Echion first praises his son and then points out a fault. Is this typical of some parents? Echion seems to regard his son's pet-keeping or bird-watching as unhealthy.
- 5-6 **ego illi tres cardeles occidi et dixi 'mustella eos comedit':** pupils will form their own opinion of this action!
[Goldfinches](#) were kept as pets by the Romans and also by the British even up to Victorian times. They have pretty colours, a pleasant song and they are easy to feed on small seeds.
The child might well believe that a [weasel had eaten his pet](#) as weasels were kept on farms and in homes to control mice.
- 6 **invenit tamen alias nenias:** Echion again adopts a dismissive tone when describing his son's interests: *nenias* – some nonsense.
- 6-7 **et libentissime pingit:** painting is not mentioned as a pastime encouraged by Roman parents.
- 7 **litteris Graeculis:** a *grammaticus* would teach Greek as well as Latin literature. The diminutive here is typical of the language which Petronius gives to the freedmen, but it may also show some contempt by Echion of Greek literature.
calcem impingit: some people take this metaphor to mean 'to kick against something' and therefore to give it up, but it seems better here to take it as 'setting one's heel' onto the task, and hence 'get stuck into'.
- 7-8 **et Latinas coepit non male appetere:** the litotes makes this tricky to translate.

- 8 **emi ergo puero aliquot libros rubricatos:** The context makes it clear that the books with heading drawn in red are about law. Echion focuses on the outward appearance to the books. He is vague about the quantity (*aliquot*) of the books and does not mention the author or any detail. Echion does not mention encouraging his boy to read the books nor helping him: seems to think that buying the books for the boy will be enough.
- 9 **quia volo illum aliquid de iure gustare:** *gustare* suggests that Echion considers that just a taste of the law will be sufficient.
- 10 **habet haec res panem:** Echion is concerned only with the financial side of law as an occupation. Again in the word *panem* he uses a metaphor.
- 9-10 **si noluerit:** how much choice will Echion give his son?
- 10-11 **destinavi illum artificium docere – aut tonstrinum aut praeconem, aut certe causidicum – quod illi auferre possit nihil nisi Orcus:** there is humour in the arbitrary choice of occupations and the order in which Echion puts them. The addition of the word *certe*, makes it look as though *causidicus* is an afterthought, the last and least of the occupations he has decided for this son. This is probably the reverse order of the social status afforded by these occupations, although *causidicus* is sometimes used in a contemptuous sense compared with the word *orator*. All the occupations are ones which it would be possible for the son of a freedman to take up, but, out of these, a career in law, even as a *causidicus* would be the most prestigious. It would certainly be the only one of those mentioned for which the boy would need to be pupil with Agamemnon. Martial 2.64 is addressed to a man deciding whether to become a teacher of rhetoric or a *causidicus*: the two occupations would require the same level of education. Echion may believe that work as a *causidicus* would be less profitable than as a barber or *praeco*. There is not enough evidence to know whether he is right or wrong. Horace, in the passage in this selection (qv), mentions small wages in connection with a *praeco*; on the other hand in Satire 11.2 he mentions a *praeco* Gallonius who had been criticised by Lucilius for serving a huge expensive fish to his guests. Presumably Gallonius had made enough money from being a *praeco* to afford the fish. Perhaps times had changed.
- tonstrinus:** [Going to the barber](#) was an essential activity for a Roman man. As well as having his hair trimmed, he would have his face shaved and his nails trimmed, both skilled tasks with the tools available at the time and ones which were difficult to do for oneself. The barber's shop was also valuable as a place to hear and pass on all the latest news and gossip.
- 11-12 **quod illi auferre nihil nisi Orcus:** another reference to death.
- 12 **ideo illi cotidie clamo:** we might speculate as to why Echion shouts at his son rather than talk to him!
- 12-13 **'fili, crede mihi, quicquid discis, tibi discis:** Seneca expresses the same idea in Letters from a Stoic, Epistle 7.
- 13 **litterae thesaurus est:** actually Echion says *thesaurum*, using the wrong gender for *thesaurus* – another grammatical error. It is surprising that Echion tells his son the literature is a treasure trove, after what he said to Agamemnon earlier.
- et artificium numquam moritur:** a trade never dies – a trade is with you for life - another reference to death, a variation on *quod illi auferre nihil nisi Orcus*.

Discussion

Although Echion has said that Agamemnon is not of the same class as him and his friends and is laughing at the words of poor people, Echion is not actually poor – all the freedmen in the conversation are rich. Echion has enough money to have tutors for his son, and he has a country estate. Agamemnon, on the other hand, is rather poor - but he has had an education and is a teacher of rhetoric. Echion's 'poverty' then is cultural, a lack of education.

How seriously this can be taken as a description of the thinking and behaviour of a typical Roman father is questionable. As with the rest of the *Cena Trimalchionis* there is a strong element of fantasy and exaggeration. There must be, however, some grain of reality in it; otherwise it would not have been amusing. Echion is being mocked here, but so is Agamemnon. One important theme of the *Satyricon* was questioning whether the sort of training in rhetoric which Agamemnon taught was valuable. At the start of the work Agamemnon is told: *pace vestra liceat dixisse, primi omnium eloquentiam perdidistis*: With your permission I must tell you the truth, that you teachers more than anyone have been the ruin of true eloquence.

This passage can be compared with the passage of Horace in this selection for a father-son relationship and for issues of schooling and parental career aspirations. Horace's father and Echion were freedmen. When comparing the two passages, does it make a difference that one was about real people and the other is fictional?

Issues raised for comparison with modern times:

- Which occupations can be considered low status?
- How important is education?
- Do parental aspirations matter in career choices?
- Is training in public speaking (rhetoric) valuable now?

Further Reading

A Companion to Petronius, by Edward Courtney

Translations

There are translations on these sites:

- [Ancient History](#)
- [Sacred Texts](#)
- [News Genius](#)
- [Picador](#)

About the Author

See the [CSCP website](#).

Introduction

This is a whole poem. The metre is elegiacs.

There is some value in letting the meaning of the poem develop as it is read and explored. You may choose not to reveal Martial's relationship with Erotion until it becomes apparent in line 7 or even after the end of the poem.

- 1 **hanc ... puellam commendo:** Martial starts as if he is simply sending his parents a slave-girl and writing a formal letter of commendation for her. Pupils may need reassurance that uncertainty about the precise meaning of *commendo* and the meaning of the first words of the poem is normal: the precise meaning will become clear as they go through the poem.
tibi, Fronto pater, genetrix Flaccilla: we will assume that these are Martial's parents, although Mantke suggests that they are Erotion's parents. Albert A Bell argues against Mantke [here](#).
Fronto pater, genetrix Flaccilla is a chiasmus.
Genetrix is an elevated word for mother.
The address and the word *commendo* give a formal tone to the start of the poem.
- 2 **oscula ... deliciosque meas:** these endearments show a touching affection. M J Tennick (*Libellus Handbook*) says that these immediately break down the formality of the opening and points out that there is no hint of gloom yet. Pupils may be wondering about the relationship between Martial and this little girl. It is not clear from this poem that Erotion was a slave (*vernula*): that information comes from poem 5.37.
- 3 **parvula ne nigras horrescat Erotion umbras:** now it becomes clear that the poem is about the death of Erotion: Martial is entrusting Erotion to his dead parents so that she will not be afraid. The diminutive *parvula* and the image of the *nigras umbras* give pathos. This is a golden line. There is alliteration of 'r' and the line slows for the spondees *ne nigras horresc(at)*.
The name Erotion means Loved One.
- 4 **oraque Tartarei prodigiosa canis:** Cerberus is monstrous because of his three heads. Tennick says 'There is a degree of empathy in the way that Martial has selected just the sights which might terrify a six year old child'. The alliteration of 'r' continues from the previous line into *oraque Tartarei*.
- 5 **impletura fuit sextae modo frigora brumae vixisset totidem ni minus illa dies:** the mention of the days as well as the years adds to the pathos – such a young child dying just before her sixth birthday.
- 6 **inter tam veteres ludat lasciva patronos:** Martial's first wish is that Erotion may play between Fronto and Flacilla. Arthur A Bell Jr points out that the wish is not the usual one that Erotion may rest – that would suit an adult, not a child. We may take *lasciva* attributively (Erotion was mischievous) or predicatively with *ludat* (may she play mischievously). The word order reflects the meaning: *ludat lasciva* between *veteres ... patronos*.

The nuances of the word *patronos* are difficult to convey in English. Martial clearly intends that his parents are to be the girl's protectors or carers in the underworld so that she can play safely without fear. But this may also denote the owner/slave relationship.

ludat is a jussive subjunctive and so are the following three verbs.

- 8 **et nomen blaeso garriat ore meum:** Martial's second wish has such personal touches – the child still has *blaeso... ore* a lisping mouth and the name what Martial wishes her to chatter is *nomen... meum* – his own name. What did she call him? This line begins with six long syllables – the maximum possible in that part of a pentameter.
- 9 **mollia non rigidus caespes tegat ossa:** a further wish. The words *non* and *rigidus* must be taken together and predicatively. The word order emphasises the contrast between *rigidus* and *mollia*. Because she was so young, Erotion's bones were still softer than the turf. Note that some online translations are not correct here. The Romans had the choice of cremation or inhumation. In Poem 10.61 Martial speaks of a funeral pyre. After burning the ashes and what remained of the bones would be sprinkled with perfume, placed in an urn and buried or put in a tomb. In Poem 10.61 Martial asks the new owner of the plot of land where Erotion was buried to continue to bring annual gifts. [This article](#) is a very detailed account of funerals and burial practices:
- 10 **nec illi terra, gravis fueris: non fuit illa tibi:** the prayer that the earth may lie lightly on a body was traditional (SSTL – *sit tibi terra levis*) but does not have to be seen as insincere here for that reason. *nec illi* at the end of the line contrasts with *tibi* at the end of the next and the polyptoton of *fueris* and *fuit* in the middle between them gives symmetry.

Discussion

Poor Erotion did not grow up.

The other poems about Erotion are *Epigrams* 5.37 and 10.61. Arthur A Bell Jr makes a strong case for considering that Erotion may have been Martial's daughter by a slave woman. But Statius in *Silvae* 5.5 expresses deep grief for a slave child which, as he says, was not his.

As this is a whole poem, the structure can be examined. It contains all the elements of a real epitaph: the deceased's name, age and qualities and a prayer that the earth may lie lightly.

The poem has been described as 'charming but conventional' (Kenney). Tennick writes 'To such a conventional substructure Martial has added (i) a vivid personal connection; (ii) detailed artistry'. (Libellus Handbook pages 122-3)

Further Reading

This poem is discussed in Libellus Handbook pages 122-3.

A [full scholarly discussion](#) online, by Arthur A Bell Jr.

Some [additional notes](#) online.

See [this website](#) for poems about the death of a child. This includes Robert Herrick's poem with its last line reminiscent of Martial 5.34.

Translations

Notice that some of the translations are not totally correct.

- Tertullian.org
- [Blogum Romanum](#)
- [Pilgrim Soul](#)
- [Poetry in Translation](#)

Audio

[Listen to a reading](#) of the poem in Latin.

About the Author

See the [CSCP website](#).

Introduction

This is a whole poem. The metre is scazon.

1 ludi magister parce simplici turbae: Martial addresses a school teacher and tells him what to do. The children are *simplici turbae*.

The first line summarises the poem, but exactly how the teacher is to spare the children is not made clear until the last line. Students do not need to worry that the meaning is not immediately clear. Martial intends us to feel curious about what he means and to keep listening or read on. The full meaning is made clear in the two line sat at the end, giving the poem a circular form.

For schoolteachers and schooling see the [CSCP website](#).

2 sic ... frequentes: the teacher's incentive for following Martial's advice will be to have more pupils and therefore more fees: *audiant*, *diligat* and *coronetur* are present subjunctive in conditional clauses for which *sic* replaces *quod si feceris* or similar.

audiant: in a Roman school the students did not have much to look at and so listening to the teacher would have been a prime activity.

capillati: most other references to long-haired children (Martial 2.57, 12.18, 12.49, 12.70, 12.97) are clearly to slave-boys. In *Epigram* 3.57, about an impossibly ideal Baian villa, Martial writes:

*et paedagogo non iubente lascivi
parere gaudent vilico capillati
et delicatus opere fruitur eunuchus*

'and, without the orders of the *paedagogos*, long-haired boys merrily rejoice in obeying the bailiff and the delicate eunuch enjoys work'

It is usually assumed that Martial is talking about a school for slaves in 3.57.

3 et delicatae diligat chorus mensae: the table is described as *delicatae*, but the epithet can be transferred to the children i.e. not only would they be many, they would be *delicati* as well. *delicatus* has a range of meanings: delicate, charming, young, tender, elegant, effeminate.

chorus suggests a troupe of dancers and singers, perhaps in a ring and foreshadows *coronetur* in line 5.

3 diligat - that they would be fond of the teacher – possibly only if he follows Martial's advice.

Tennick writes: '*capillati* and *delicatae* and *diligat* (assisted by soft 'l' alliteration and assonance) have a sensuous quality suggesting the physical charm of the pupils'.

4 calculator: an accountant or, here, a maths teacher (this is the only use of the word in an educational context - maths was usually taught by a *litterator*). Calculations were done by moving pebbles (*calculi*) on a smooth board, tray or table. There was a portable version, a hand abacus in which the counters were fixed in slots. The Roman bi-quinary coded decimal system: this is apparent in the way that Roman numerals were organised and is evident in the one example of a hand abacus (see weblinks [one](#), [two](#), [three](#) and [four](#)).

notarius velox: a writer or teacher of short-hand. Tiro, Cicero's freedman was said to have introduced short-hand to Rome, or possible to have invented his own system.

Vindolanda Tablets [122 -126](#) and [119](#).

Line 4 enjambs swiftly into line 5.

- 5 **maiore quisquam circulo coronetur:** this has two meanings: being surrounded by a larger crowd and being crowned as a victor with a wreath. The alliteration of 'c' and 'q', which has been building up in the previous lines, reaches a climax here.
- 6-7 **albae leone flammeo calent luces tostamque fervens Iulius coquit messem:** the sign of the Zodiac [Leo](#), the months of July –August. In the evocative description of the hot summer 'there is not a single word in this couplet ... which fails to contribute to the brightness, power and heat of the summer sun' (Tennick). There is a return to the alliteration of 'l'.
- 8 **cirrata loris horridis Scythae pellis:** a 'cat-o-nine-tails'. There is the rumbling of 'rr' in *cirrata* and *horridis*. In the literal translation *pellis* is taken as nominative meaning whip (the usual translation is hide or leather), *Scythae* as a noun in the genitive i.e. of a Scythian or of the Scythian, and *cirrata* as an adjective meaning edged (the usual meaning is curly-haired) in the nominative to agree with *pellis*.
The words *Scythae pellis* may be a nickname for the usual *scutica* (whip).
The Scythians are described by Herodotus: they used a whip as a weapon, rather than their usual bow and arrows, when putting down a slave revolt; they used to remove the head of enemies defeated in battle, remove the scalp and make it into a cloth; they tattooed their own skin. See the following weblinks for more details:
- [List Verse](#)
 - [Facts and Details](#)
 - [NY Times](#)
 - [Archaeology Archive](#)
- You may or may not want to listen to the Tasmanian death metal band Born Headless who have a song called [Scalps of Scythia](#).
Martial is beginning here to get into detail about how the schoolteacher should spare the pupils.
- 9 **vapulavit Marsyas Celaenaesus:** the teacher and the school children would be familiar with a mythological reference as a prominent feature of classroom discourse. The addition of Celaenaesus, Marsyas' birth place, would be a typical scholarly tag by the teacher. Marsyas was flogged as a punishment for playing the flute and his skin was removed while he was alive. There was a statue of Marsyas in the Roman Forum. It was regarded as a symbol of liberty, especially for the lower classes. See Anish Kapoor's [Marsyas sculpture](#) and [a red-figure pot](#).
- 10 **ferulaeque tristes:** canes were the other tool for punishment. Whether a stalk of the Giant Fennel was used, as some people say, is unlikely as it is quite weak. The canes could be *tristes* from the point of view of the children or they could be sad because they are about to cease work, if the teacher takes Martial's advice.
How common was physical punishment in Roman times? Horace says that his teacher in Rome was called Orbilius the Flogger (Ep 2.1.70). Quintilian, however, says that corporal punishment is a disgraceful form of punishment fit only for slaves, that it does not create self-control. He hints that there is a danger of it leading to sexual abuse by unscrupulous adults.
Modern schoolchildren hopefully will be unfamiliar with caning as a personal experience, but may know of Roald Dahl's account of his punishment for the mouse plot in *Boy*.

- 10 **sceptra paedagogorum:** the sceptre was the symbol of royal power and Martial is mocking the *paedagogi*. For the use of the cane by a *paedagogos*, see Martial Epigram 11.39 in this selection.
- 11 **cessent:** finally we find out what Martial is asking the teacher to do.
Idus dormiant in Octobres: but the cessation of flogging is not permanent – it is only until the 15th of October. The idea of *dormiunt* is humorous. Tennick writes: ‘the whip and canes are to sleep, just like the dozing pupils on whom they are used.’
- 12 **aestate pueri si valent, satis discunt:** Martial finishes with a *sententia*. *Valent* suggests that the children might be healthier out of the city in the summer. The tribrach in the last three syllables of *aestate pueri* ‘underlines the lightness of heart at the prospect’ of a summer without schooling (Tennick).
 It is not certain whether it was customary to have a break from school from June to the [15th of October](#).

Discussion

As indicated in the notes above the poem is structured so that the theme *–parce-* is put vaguely in the first line but it only fully makes sense when you get to the two last lines. Within the poem the structure is: four lines (2-5) for what the schoolteacher would gain; two lines for the heat; four lines for the detailed instruction for the teacher; one line for a final reason.

The poem is constructed as a one-sided conversation. In this respect, it is similar to the other Martial epigrams in this selection and to the passage from Horace’s *Satires* and to the passage from Juvenal’s *Satire*.

Issues raised include:

- corporal punishment
- the length of summer holidays for school children

Further Reading

This poem is discussed in *Libellus Handbook* pages 72-74.

Translations

- Strange , old fashioned translations at Tertullian.org.
- Nice inspired version by [Fr. Z.](#)
- Beware – many false readings at [No Dictionaries](#).

This is a whole poem. The metre is elegiacs.

- 1 **cunarum fueras motor, Charideme, mearum:** Martial addresses Charidemus and states a detail about the earliest part of the relationship between him and Charidemus, which had started when Martial was a baby in his cradle. The pluperfect is frequent in Martial for the perfect tense. The [cradle from Herculaneum](#) was a highlight of the recent exhibition at the British Museum.
- 2 **et pueri custos assiduusque comes:** Martial moves onto his boyhood when Charidemus became his *paedagogos*. Does the word *assiduus* hint that Charidemus was good at his job or at some resentment by Martial?
- 3 **iam mihi nigrescunt tonsa sudaria barba:** *sudaria* are the barber's towels, used either to catch the shavings or to wipe the razor. There is alliteration of 's' and 'r'. *mihi* is dative, but can be slipped into the translation as 'my'.
In the use of the present tense and inceptive *nigrescunt* Martial presents himself as being at the age when a boy begins to visit the barber's shop for a shave. You may or may not choose to tell your students now that at the time of publishing the poems Martial was in fact over 50.
A boy's first shave was considered an important event and the clippings were sometimes dedicated to the household gods.
- 4 **et queritur labris puncta puella meis:** despite only just starting a beard, Martial says that his girl-friend is complaining about it. The alliteration of 'p' in *puncta puella* adds to the humour.
- 5 **sed tibi non crevi:** *tibi* is dative of the person judging – in your eyes. It follows closely on *meis* in the previous line.
- 5-6 **te noster vilicus horret, te dispensator, te domus ipsa pavet:** Martial declares that everyone is afraid of Charidemus. Martial uses an ascending tricolon of nouns interspersed with repeated 'te'. The *vilicus* was the bailiff or overseer of the slaves, although he was usually a slave himself. The *dispensator* was the household manager, steward, accountant; he was usually a trustworthy slave but sometimes was free-born. Even if they were slaves, there is no reason why these people should fear Charidemus – nor should Martial!
- 7 **ludere nec nobis nec tu permittis amare:** a direct criticism of Charidemus. At first it looks like *ludere* could refer back to a childhood when Charidemus wouldn't let the boy Martial play, but use of the present tense and the addition of 'amare' shows that Charidemus is trying to prevent Martial indulging in adult forms of play, such as drinking, gambling or writing poetry or sexual encounters.
- 8 **nil mihi vis et vis cuncta licere tibi:** the hyperbole in *nil mihi vis* sounds like the caricature of a sulky teenager as does the accusation that Charidemus apparently however wants all pleasures for himself.
- 9 **corripis, observas, quereris, suspiria ducis:** the list of signs of disapproval from Charidemus begins in quick succession with these four verbs in asyndeton in the 2nd person. Charidemus is as *assiduus* in his criticism now as he had been a companion to the boy.

- 10 **et vix a ferulis temperat ira tua:** Martial then takes a whole line describing how Charidemus can scarcely refrain from using the cane. Martial makes *ira* the subject, rather than Charidemus.
For *ferula* see notes on Martial Epigram 10.62.
- 11 **si Tyrios sumpsit cultus:** Tyrian dye was made from shellfish and was very expensive. It gave a reddish or brownish purple colour. The wearing of purple clothes would be considered extravagant. It would be sure to draw comment from old Charidemus.
See the following websites for more:
 - [Chris Cooksey](#)
 - [Saudi Aramco World](#)
 - [Ancient History Encyclopedia](#)**unxive capillos:** Martial has used product on his hair: this would be perfumed oil. [This advertisement](#) portrays shock at a hairstyle:
- 12 **exclamas 'numquam fecerat ista pater':** This is the only time that Charidemus gets his own say in the poem. Charidemus expresses disapproval by invoking the authority of Martial's father. Tennick writes that it is a 'remark carefully calculated, given the prominence of the paterfamilias, to deflate the young man about town'. The position of *pater* at the end of the line and end of the sentence give it impact.
- 13 **et numeras nostros astricta fronte trientes:** the unit measurement was a *cyathus* (*kyathos*). A *triens* was a cup which contained three *cyathi* i.e. about one fifth of a litre. See a *kyathos*:
 - [Met Museum](#)
 - [World Visit Guide](#)
Buy a *kyathos*:
 - [Alexander Ancient Art](#)
Roman cups
 - [British Museum](#)
 - [Met Museum](#)
 - [Granger](#)
- 14 **tamquam de cella sit cadus ille tua:** *sit* is subjunctive because this is hypothetical – the jar and the *cella* do not belong to Charidemus, although he counts the cups as if they were. Perhaps once he was ordered to keep an eye on the young master's drinking. Is Martial's remark a put-down to the old slave not to get above his station? The first half of the line contains long syllables giving a measured weight to it.
- 15 **desine:** an abrupt order.
non possum libertum ferre Catonem: Marcus Porcius Cato (the one who said *Carthago delenda est*) and his grandson Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis were known for their uncompromising strict judgement. Cicero praised the younger Cato as being *gravissimus*.
The second, third and fourth feet in this line (*non possum libertum*) are spondees as Martial slowly declares his view.
- 16 **esse virum iam me dicet amica tibi:** Martial now says that his girlfriend will tell Charidemus that Martial is a man. *Virum* can mean both an adult and a sexually active man. Are they the same thing? Tennick writes 'No doubt the girlfriend, an outsider to the family, will be better able to get home to Charidemus'. Alternatively

some humour lies in the climb-down from Martial's pomposity of the previous line - now Martial seems to need corroboration for his adult status.

Discussion

In the poem Martial presents himself as a youth and gives a one-sided conversation with his paedagogos. We hear Charidemus voice once in direct speech '*numquam fecerat ista pater*'. Yet it is possible to tell quite a lot about Charidemus from what is said about him, even if it is from one point of view.

If you did not tell your students earlier that Martial was old when he published the poem, when you reveal this at the end, you can ask if it makes a difference if you know that this poem was not written by a teenager. This poem is the most obvious passage in the selection to illustrate the use of persona.

The tone with which Martial speaks changes through the poem; students should look closely at the Latin for evidence for this.

Issues raised include:

- What it means to be a man or to be an adult
- Slavery

Further Reading

This poem is discussed in the *Libellus Handbook* pages 103-105.

This is an extract from a poem - this passage is the beginning. The metre is dactylic hexameter.

- 1 **plurima sunt, Fuscine, et fama digna sinistra:** Juvenal states the general theme of the poem in the first line and puts the key words at the beginning and the end of the line. The name Fuscinus appears here and no where else. It is presumably connected with the word *fuscus* which means dark.
- 2 **quae monstrant ipsi pueris traduntque parentes:** the subject is delayed to the last word so that it is a surprise – the people who demonstrate and pass on bad habits should not be the parents: they should be the guardians of their children’s morals and reputation.
- 3 **si damnosa senem iuvat alea, ludit et heres bullatus parvoque eadem movet arma fritillo:** the first unsavoury activity mentioned is [gambling](#). The prominent position and the meaning of *damnosa* suggest some vehemence – this is a seriously harmful activity. The bucolic diaeresis (a pause at the end of the fourth foot) here gives impact to the words in the following two feet.
[Make](#) ‘Roman’ dice, buy some [dice with Roman numerals](#) or some [reproductions](#) (and again [here](#)) or read [The Golden Dice - A Tale of Ancient Rome](#).
Gambling remains a problem today: see articles from the [NHS](#) and on [Wikipedia](#).
- 4 **bullatus:** the *bullula* was the amulet worn by a boy until the day of his coming of age ceremony in his mid-teens. The heir has started gambling very young.
For more on Roman clothing, see [VRoma.org](#). [Harry Potter with a bulla?](#)
arma: the metaphor is a common one for the dice.
fritillo: the [dice box](#). The fritillary butterfly and the plant are named after *fritillus*, the Latin dice box.
- 5 **nec melius ... et cana monstrante gula:** the length of this part of the sentence and the word order make it difficult.
cuiquam propinquo: a relative who is a potential heir, but should not be too hopeful of getting anything.
iuvenis: the youth is older than the *bullatus* boy, but he too has an expensive habit – not gambling, but being a foodie.
- 6-8 **qui radere tubera terrae ... didicit:** truffles were expensive then, as they are now (for example, [eFoodies](#) and [Harrods](#)). The young man not only eats truffles, he has learned to peel them for himself, rather than have his cook do it.
Grow some [truffles](#).
- 7 **boletum condire:** to pickle a boletus. The *Boletus Edulis* is the same as Funghi Porcini and Cep. Five minutes of Italian men enthusiastically [hunting mushrooms](#). Pickled [porcini](#) for sale.
- 8 **et eodem iure natantes mergere ficedulas:** ficedulas are small birds. The Latin name indicates a fig-pecker but zoologically the name is now given specifically to European Flycatchers, an insectivore, as befits its English name.
- 8-9 **nebulone parente et cana monstrante gula:** two ablative absolutes. The parent is a *nebulo* – a useless waste of space. The word *nebulo* is close to the word *nebula*

- meaning mist or fog; *gula* is the throat or gullet and hence appetite; *cana* is white or grey. The Romans regarded a pale complexion in a man as a sign of bad character.
- 10 **cum septimus annus transierit puerum, nondum omni dente renato:** the point is that a child can learn bad habits very young and then it is too late to change him.
- 11-12 **barbatus licet admoveas mille inde magistros hinc totidem:** the fashion for beards varied through ancient time but there are certainly pictures of bearded teachers. Nearly all philosophers are shown with beards and so it would lend an air of erudition for a teacher to wear a beard. Martial's point is that even a thousand teachers, however venerable, on one side and another thousand on the other would not be able to reform the young gourmand.
- 12 **cupiet lauto cenare paratu semper:** even if we accept that some portrayals of dinner parties by some in Roman authors are exaggerated, it does seem that some Romans were more interested in the elaborate preparation and elegant serving of meals than in the taste of food. Pupils will be familiar with Haterius' meal in CLC Book IV page 63.
- 14 **sic natura iubet:** a *sententia* or epigram – a short memorable saying.
N.B In the passage some lines are omitted before this line.
velocius et citius: the pairing of the comparative adjectives with similar meaning emphasises the speed with which the young are corrupted and the enjambment into line 15 keeps the pace fast.
nos: accusative. It is unusual to have a monosyllable at the end of a line and it gives an offbeat rhythm. As usual when Juvenal does this, the line enjambes into the next.
- 15 **vitiorum exempla domestica:** nominative – the subject is delayed and the word *domestica* is emphasised by position before the unusual pause at the end of the fifth foot. The elision of the final syllable of *vitiorum* maintains the fast pace - the examples set at home work rather quickly.
- 15-16 **magnis cum subeant animos auctoribus:** *magnis* is outside of its clause and is given impact by this and its position as last word in the line. The 'great role-models' are the parents: the sarcasm is given impact by the sibilance.

Discussion

Juvenal rants against bad parenting. The form of the poem is a one-sided conversation (compare Martial's epigrams and the extract from Horace's Satires in this selection).

Issues arising include

- gambling
- foodyism
- the influence of parents
- the ability to change habits learned when young

Further Reading

John Ferguson: *Juvenal the Satires* (Macmillan 1979).

An [article](#) on debt, foodyism and Nigella linked to ancient Rome.

Pliny, Letters 9.12

This is a whole letter.

- 1 **quidam:** a man that Pliny does not name. He addresses him with '*heus tu*' in line 2 which shows that he was either a close friend or a person of lower social standing.
- 1-2 **quod paulo sumptuosius equos et canes emeret:** the dogs and horses might just have been pets (in Letter 4.2 about Regulus and his son, the boy's animals mentioned are ponies, dogs and birds) but it is more likely that, as just dogs and horses are mentioned together here, they were bought for the sport of hunting. Strabo writes that hunting dogs were exported from Britain (*Geography* 4.5). Columella describes in detail the ideal horse for riding and hunting in *De Re Rustica*, 6.29.

Horses

- Telegraph article on [horses ridden by Roman emperors](#).
- [Marble statue of a youth on horseback](#) at British Museum.
- [Hunting on horse back](#).
- Gaius Caesar riding a horse:



Dogs:

- CLC Book II page 11
 - "[Hunt Cup](#)" at Boston Museum of Fine Arts
 - "[Hunt Cup](#)" on Roman Society website
- 2 **iuvene digresso:** Pliny was careful to wait until the young man had gone before criticising the father
- 3-4 **"fecisti" dico. non interdum facis:** Pliny corrects himself on the tense he has used. This way of narrating the anecdote gives it the feel of a real conversation.
- 4 **pater ille tu filius:** chiasmus. Understand a verb such as *fieret* here; take *ille* as the subject and *pater* as the complement.
- 5 **non omnes homines aliquo errore ducuntur:** a variation on *errare est humanum*.
- 6-7 **haec ... tibi pro amore mutuo scripsi:** Pliny gives his reason for writing this to Terentius.
- exemplo immodicae severitatis:** compare with Cicero's '*severitate tuae non respondebo*' (line 9 in the passage in this selection).
- 7-9 **ne quando tu quoque filium tuum acerbius duriusque tractares:** Pliny gives a more detailed reason for writing.
- 8-9 **cogita et illum puerum esse et te fuisse:** Pliny gives the first of his direct commands - *cogita*.

Pupils may need to be made aware of 'et ... et ...' and may need help with the double accusative and infinitive *illum puerum esse et te fuisse*.

9 atque hoc quod es pater ita utere: Pliny gives the second of his direct commands – *utere*. Students may not be familiar with the imperative form of a deponent verb. *Hoc* is ablative with *utere*.

9-10 ut meminervis: perfect subjunctive with present meaning in result clause headed up by *ita*.

et hominem esse te et hominis patrem: Students may need help to see that the accusative in the indirect statement is *te* and that *hominem* and *patrem* are the complements.

Discussion

Pliny is writing this letter to Terentius Junior. There is one other letter to him, 8.15, in which Pliny apologises for sending him for sending so many books at once. Pliny writes about him in 7.25, praising him for his erudition and modesty.

In this letter Pliny pleads for indulgence towards a son. In *Letter 4.2*, Pliny criticises Regulus for over-indulgence towards his son and for the ostentatious display of grief at the death of his son, because he had all the boy's animals killed around the funeral pyre.

Pliny here criticises a parent and gives advice to a friend on parenting. Pliny wanted children but did not have any. Book 8 in particular contains a lot of advice from Pliny about young people.

This passage can be compared with the one by Cicero in this selection.

Issues arising include:

- Are there faults peculiar to youth which a person grows out of?
- Parenting skills – do you need to be a parent to give advice?
- Does Pliny give good advice?
- What is the modern equivalent of buying horses and dogs?

Further reading

[Cato as a model for a parent](#)

See also Pliny *Letter 8.23*.

About the Author

See the [CSCP website](#).

This is an extract which comes fairly near the beginning of the work.

- 1 **mater Iulia Procilla fuit:** from her name it is thought that she came from Gaul as did Agricola's father. His father, Graecinus was from Forum Julii (Frejus), a *colonia* founded eighty years earlier for Julius Caesar's veterans. Graecinus had written a book on viniculture and this may account for Agricola's name. Tacitus describes the family as 'equestrian nobility' and Graecinus as being of senatorial rank. As a senator he would have lived in Rome to carry out his duties. Graecinus had been killed in the year that Agricola was born, AD 40, probably on the orders of the Emperor Caligula. Julia Procilla returned to Gaul with her son after her husband's death.
- rarae castitatis:** a conventional description for a good Roman woman
- 1-2 **in huius sinu indulgentiaque educatus:** zeugma or hendiadys? *in huius sinu* can be taken literally as meaning that Julia Procilla breast-fed her child rather than using a wet-nurse.
- 2-3 **per omnem honestarum artium cultum pueritiam adulescentiamque transegit:** Tacitus describes this as geometry, music, grammar, logic and ethics (Tac. *Dial.* 30.4)
- 3-4 **arcebat eum ab inlecebris peccantium:** the subject of *arcebat* is the following *quod*-clause up to *habuit*: 'What protected him from the enticements of wrong-doers - apart from his own decent unspoilt personality - was the fact that...'
- 5 **statim parvulus sedem ac magistram studiorum Massiliam habuit:** Julia Procilla moved to Marseilles when Agricola was very young.
- 6-7 **Graeca comitate et provinciali parsimonia mixtum ac bene compositum:** Strabo praised Marseilles as being better as a place for education than Athens (*Geog.* 4.1.5). Cicero had also lauded its *disciplina* and *gravitas*: *pro Flacc.* 26.63. *Comitas* here is the opposite of *arrogantia* or *petulantia*. Because of its Greek origin, Marseille had *comitas* (manners/culture/refinement). This might be regarded as degenerate and soft by a Roman but in Massilia it was constrained by provincial *parsimonia*; in a similar way a provincial town might lean too far towards parsimony in the bad sense, meanness and consequent lack of elegance, but in Massilia this was checked by its Greek love of culture.
- 7 **memoria teneo:** as his son-in law, Tacitus recalls a conversation with Agricola
- 7-8 **solitum ipsum narrare se prima in iuventa studium philosophiae acrius ultra quam concessum est Romano:** the Roman caution about how much philosophy was healthy was based on the idea that it would detract from an active life i.e. being involved in politics or military life.
- 9 **ac senatori:** future senator as Agricola was destined to be and as his mother intended him to be.
- hausisse:** the figurative use of *haurio* is common.
- 9-10 **ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset:** Julia Procilla was making sure that her son learned moderation. The pairing of the two figurative words for passionate feeling *incensum ac flagrantem* reflects the excess of enthusiasm.

- 11 **prima castrorum rudimenta in Britannia adprobavit:** *adprobavit = effecit ut probarentur* i.e. he did the training and passed. A small part of the original text is omitted after this.
- 11-12 **nec Agricola licenter ... neque segniter titulum tribunatus et inscitiam ad voluptates et commeatus rettulit:** this is a difficult sentence to analyse, to such an extent that some scholars have suggested emendations to the text. But it will work if *rettulit* is seen as doing double duty loosely with both adverbs with the idea of 'regarded as' first and then 'treated as' second.
- 13 **titulum tribunatus:** clearly this cannot imply that Agricola just had a titular role – Tacitus is stressing that Agricola carried out his duties energetically, so it must just mean that he had the rank of military tribune. The choice of words may signify that Agricola was not attached to any particular legion. There were normally six tribunes to a legion: young men aged between 18 and 24 who served for a year or two. The Emperor Augustus had passed a law that young men must hold the rank of tribune for a year before being allowed to stand for the quaestorship, the first rank of a political career.
There are two ideas here:
licente, lascivia, voluptates = having fun
segniter, commeatus = being lazy and negligent
- 14 **sed noscere provinciam, nosci exercitui, discere a peritis, sequi optimos:** historic infinitives and asyndeton

Discussion

Tacitus has described the perfect Roman mother. Apart from the loss of his father Agricola had an ideal upbringing. The worst thing that he did when young was to get too fond of philosophy. In preventing him from continuing with that, what his mother had taught him was moderation. Agricola then became the perfect young officer.

Pupils may wonder if all this rings true or whether Tacitus had a motive in describing Agricola in this way.

This passage can be compared to the Horace passage in this selection with regards to the influence of a parent as *formator morum*.

About the Author

See the [CSCP website](#).

Version control and tracking

Version 1.01 released on 24th June 2014: change to note on **Tacitus, *Agricola* 4-5** lines 3-4 to take *quod* clause as subject of *arcebat*.