

CSCP Support Materials

Teaching Support Publication

for

WJEC Level 2 Certificate in Latin Language and Roman Civilisation
Unit 9522: Roman Civilisation Topics
Topic 1: Daily Life in Roman Society

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Introduction

This booklet of sources on Daily Life in Roman Society is intended to support teachers and students preparing for Topic 1 of the WJEC **Level 2** Certificate in Latin Language and Roman Society.

Important notice: the purpose and status of this booklet

The purpose of this booklet is to provide teachers with a wide range of sources for their teaching. It should therefore be considered only as a **teaching support publication**. At Level 2 such booklets are **not** intended to be definitive catalogues of sources which may be used in the examination and students should not attempt, nor be encouraged, to 'rote learn' the sources contained within. Although examiners may use some of the sources in the booklets, other similar sources may also be used in the Level 2 examination.

Likewise, teachers should feel under no obligation to study any or all of the sources contained herein with their students.

Note on differences between Level 1 and Level 2

Different regulations apply at Level 1 and Level 2. At Level 1, shorter booklets containing a restricted number of sources are available. The Level 1 examination papers will use only sources from the Level 1 booklets. Please visit the WJEC website, or the Level 1 area of this website, for the Level 1 booklets.

Relevant Stages of the *Cambridge Latin Course*

Book I of the *Cambridge Latin Course* and the accompanying *Teacher's Guide* contain a significant amount of primary source material, together with explanatory texts, to support this topic:

Stage 1: Town houses

Stage 2: Cooking and meals

Stage 2: Daily routine for men and women

Stage 4: The forum

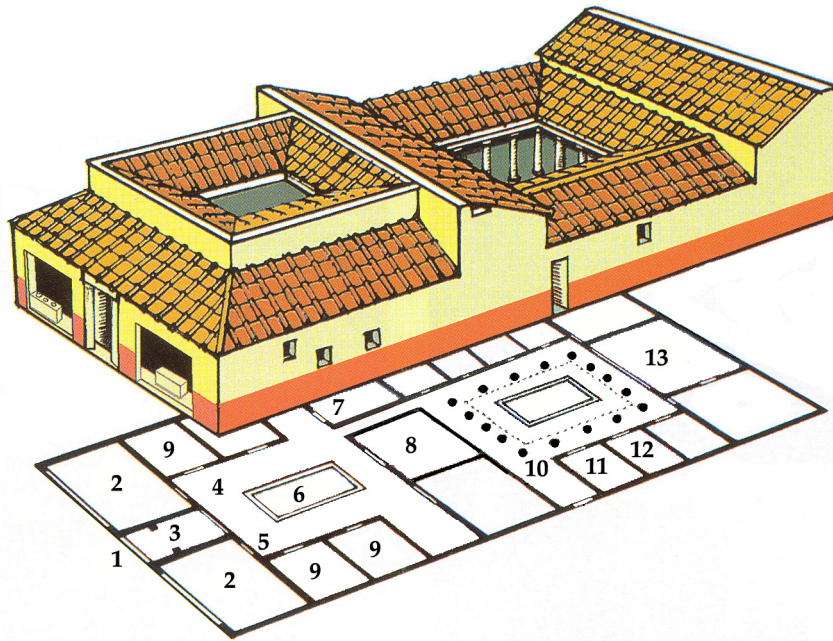
Stage 6: Slaves and freedmen

Stage 9: Daily routine for men and women

Stage 10: Schools

Stage 11: Elections

Town houses



- 1** *ianua* front door
- 2** *shops*
- 3** *fauces* entrance hall
- 4** *atrium* main room
- 5** *lararium* shrine of the household gods
- 6** *impluvium* pool for rain water
- 7** *triclinium* dining-room
- 8** *tablinum* study
- 9** *cubiculum* bedroom
- 10** *peristylum* garden court
- 11** *latrina* lavatory
- 12** *culina* kitchen
- 13** *summer triclinium*

Plan of a Pompeian House



House of the Wooden Partition, Herculaneum



**Atrium,
House of
Menader,
Pompeii**



**Atrium, House
of Menander,
Pompeii**



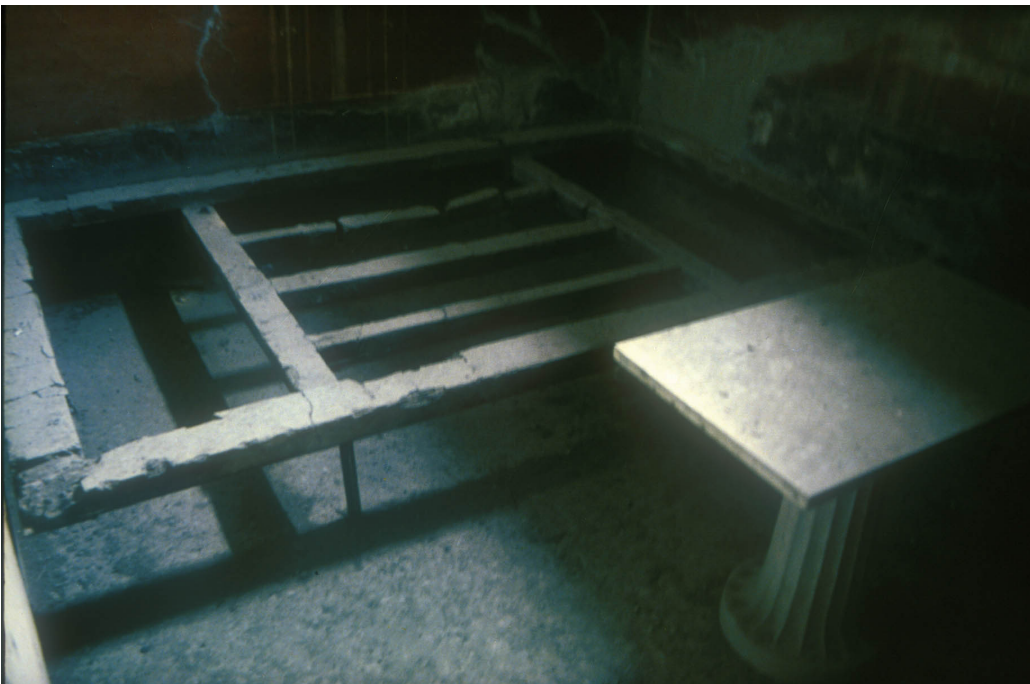
**Atrium,
House of the
Silver
Wedding,
Pompeii**



**Lararium, House
of the Tragic Poet,
Pompeii**



Summer triclinium, House of Neptune and Amphitrite, Herculaneum



Cubiculum, House in Opus Craticium, Herculaneum



Garden, House of Loreius Tiburtinus, Pompeii



Garden, Herculaneum

Juvenal, Satires III.180

Here in Rome we live in a city that's propped up with matchsticks – most of it anyway. That's the way the landlord stops the building from falling down, papering over the cracks in the old walls, telling us all not to worry, to sleep easy, and all the time the place is about to collapse around us. I think I'd rather live somewhere where there aren't any fires or sudden alarms in the middle of the night. The man on the ground floor is already calling for water and moving his bits and pieces to safety; your third-floor flat is already smoking, but you're blissfully unaware; for if the alarm is sounded at ground level, the last to burn will be the man in the attic, whose neighbours are nesting pigeons, with only the roof tiles between him and the rain.

Daily routine for men and women

Martial, Epigrams IV.8

The first and second hours wear out clients;
the third keeps hoarse lawyers busy;
Rome continues in her various labours to the end of the fifth hour.
The sixth will be the siesta for the weary, the seventh will be the end of work.
The eighth up to the ninth provides enough time for the glistening exercise grounds.
The ninth orders men to rumple cushions piled high on couches.
The tenth, Euphemus, is the hour for my little books
when you take care of organising the ambrosial feasts
and the Emperor Domitian is relaxed by heavenly nectar
and he holds a small cup in his mighty hand.
Then bring in witty poems: my Muse of comedy is scared to approach Jupiter
in the morning with her cheeky walk.

Martial, Epigrams X.74

How much longer have I got to turn up to these early-morning buttering-up sessions, mingling with the mob of followers and little men all done up in their posh togas? And for what? A handful of brass for a full day's work.

Martial, Epigrams III.36

You order me to perform for you the duties of a new and recent friend, Fabianus; that at first light, shivering, I should greet you and that your litter should drag me through the middle of the mud; that when I am worn out, I should follow you at the tenth hour or later to the baths of Agrippa ... Is this what I have deserved, Fabianus, that, when my toga is threadbare, you think I have not yet earned my discharge?

Pliny, Letters III.5

Before dawn he used to go to the Emperor Vespasian (for he also used to make use of the nights), then to the duty assigned to him. Having returned home he used to devote the remaining time to his studies. Often after breakfast (which, in the manner of his forefathers, during the day was light and easily digested) in the summer, if there was any leisure time, he used to lie in the sun, a book was read, he used to make comments and take extracts. For he read nothing which he didn't take extracts from; indeed he used to say that no book was so bad that it was not useful in some part. After the sun he was usually washed in cold water, then he used to have a snack and sleep a little; soon, as though in another day, he used to study until the time for dinner. Over dinner a book was read and it was commented on, and indeed quickly.
He did these things in the middle of chores and the bustle of the city. On retreat only the time in the baths was taken away from his studies (when I say 'in the baths', I am talking about the inner rooms; for while he was being scraped and dried he used to listen to something or dictate). On a journey as though free from other cares, he concentrated on this one alone: at his side was a secretary with a book and writing tablets, whose hands were protected in winter by gloves, so that not even the harshness of the weather should steal any time for study; for that reason, he used to be carried in a litter in Rome also. I remember that I was scolded by him, because I used to walk: 'You were able,' he said, 'not to waste these hours'; for he believed that all time was wasted, which was not spent on studies.



Palaestra, Stabian Baths, Pompeii



Apodyterium, Stabian Baths, Pompeii



Frigidarium, Stabian Baths, Pompeii



Women's Caldarium, Forum Baths, Herculaneum

Martial, Epigrams V.20

If I were allowed to enjoy carefree days with you, dear Martial,
if we were allowed to organise our leisure time
and to have time for a real life together,
we wouldn't know the atria and the houses of the powerful,
nor grim law-suits or the sad forum
nor proud statues;
but horse-riding, conversation, books,
the Campus Martius, colonnades, shade, the Aqua Virgo, and baths,
these would always be our haunts, these our pursuits.
At the moment, neither of us lives for himself, but
we notice that the good days fly by and leave us,
days which are charged to us and are gone.
Does anyone hesitate, when he knows how to live?

Martial, Epigrams XII.57

In the morning it's the schoolteachers who rob you of life; while it's still dark, the bakers are at it; and all day long the coppersmiths are hammering away. Over there, there's a money changer idly clanking his cheap coins on a filthy table; and here's a goldsmith hammering at a well-worn stone with a shiny mallet; the mob who follows the goddess Bellona keep up their raving racket and a shipwrecked sailor wrapped up in bandages has an unending line of patter; and there's always a Jew, taught from the cradle to beg, and a bleary-eyed match-seller.

Pliny, Letters I.9

It is extraordinary how if you take days spent in the city of Rome individually everything adds up or seems to add up, but when you take several days in a row they do not. If you asked anyone 'What did you do today?' he would reply: 'I was present at a coming of age ceremony, I attended an engagement or a wedding. One person asked me to witness a will, another asked me to speak for someone in court and another to give assistance to a magistrate.' On the day you do these activities they seem important, but if you consider that you have done the same things every day, they seem pointless. And they seem much more pointless when you get away from it all.



Wall-painting depicting people shopping for bread, House of Julia Felix, Pompeii



Relief showing a shopping scene

Horace, Satires I.6.111-129

Wherever I want, I walk by myself; I ask the price of herbs and bread; I cross the circus that leads people astray, and the forum often in the evening; I stand listening among the fortune-tellers; then I take myself home to a plate of onions, pulse and pancakes. My supper is served up by three slaves; and a white stone slab supports two cups and a bowl; near the salt-cellar stands a humble bottle with a little earthenware bowl from Campania. Then I go to rest; by no means concerned that I must rise in the morning, and pay a visit to the statue of Marsyas, who denies that he is able to bear the look of the younger Novius. I lie in bed to the fourth hour; after that I walk, or, having read or written what may amuse me in my privacy, I am anointed with oil, but not with the one dirty Natta uses, robbed from lamps. But when the sun becomes stronger, it reminds me to go to bathe, I avoid the Campus Martius and ball games. Having dined in a temperate manner, just enough to stop me having an empty stomach, during the rest of the day I am at leisure at home.



Relief showing a scene from a taberna, Trier, Germany



Mosaic depicting people playing dice, El Djem, Tunisia



Wall-painting depicting a banqueting scene, House of the Chaste Lovers, Pompeii

Ovid, Amores II.2

What is the good of setting a guard on a woman when there are so many theatres in Rome, when she enjoys the chariot races, when she attends the festival of Isis, when there are baths and there is always a sick friend to visit?

Ash-chest, Rome

To the most faithful, affectionate and dutiful. Vitalis, freedman of Augustus and scribe of the bedchamber had this made for Vernasia Cyclas, best of wives, who lived 27 years.

Tombstone CIL VI.11602

Here lies Amymone, wife of Marcus, most good and most beautiful, wool-spinner, dutiful, modest, careful, chaste, home-loving.



Relief showing a woman feeding a baby on a sarcophagus now in the Louvre, Paris

Slaves and freedmen



Slave chain found at Lord's Bridge, Cambridgeshire

Columella, De Re Rustica I.6

The wise master will make a habit of inspecting the slaves in the ergastulum to check that they are carefully chained up and that their cell blocks are quite safe and properly guarded. In fact the master must be particularly careful in looking after this sort of slave and making sure that they aren't cheated when it comes to handing out clothes and other things. They have the vilicus, the work master and the jailer all giving them orders so they have every chance of being punished unjustly. When they are smarting under cruelty and greed they are dangerous. The master should test their bread and drink by tasting it himself and examine their clothing, their mittens and their foot-cloths. He should give them plenty of opportunity for complaining about whoever has been bullying or cheating them.

Cato, De Agri Cultura 59

A tunic 1m long and a blanket every other year. Before you give one of them a tunic or a blanket, take the old one from him to make patchwork. Give them a pair of good wooden clogs every other year.

Columella, De Re Rustica I.8

This is how I have always treated my slaves (if they have behaved themselves) and I have no regrets. I chat with my country slaves more often and in a more friendly way than I do with my town slaves, and when I have noticed that this kindness of their master has lightened their endless drudgery I've even cracked the occasional joke and given them the chance to crack a joke themselves – if they feel like it.

Often, if I'm starting on some new project, I talk it over with them pretending that they know more about such matters than I. In this way I can spot the intelligent ones. What's more, I have noticed that they start on a job much more willingly if they think that I have asked their opinions and am following their advice.

The slaves should be organised in work-squads of ten men – no more. This number is most convenient to guard while they are working and there are not too many of them for the slave in charge to handle.

If the field is a big one, the work-squads should be given a section each; slaves shouldn't be allowed to work in ones and twos, since when they are scattered about it is difficult to guard them.

There shouldn't be more than ten men in a squad because in a larger gang everybody leaves the work to somebody else.

Slaves who have responsible jobs on the farm will be made keener by being given rewards and their own peculium – perhaps some cattle of their own and a bit of land on which to graze them. You should be careful to give each one of them a fellow slave by whom to have children.

Some of the women are able to have lots of children. When they have raised a certain number I let them off working. Sometimes I've even given them their freedom. The rule is: for three children they are let off work; for more than three, I free them.



Relief showing a slave caring for a child, gravestone, Cologne, third century AD



Relief showing slaves dressing their mistress's hair, now in the Museum of London



Relief showing a slave working as a scribe



Decorated lamp showing slaves working as porters



Relief showing slaves on the treadmill operating a crane, Monument of the Haterii, Rome



Relief depicting gladiators, Trier, Germany

Seneca, Moral Letters 47

I am really pleased to hear that you get on well with your slaves and treat them in a kindly way: that's just what I would expect from someone with your sensible attitude and intelligence.

People are always saying: 'They're only slaves.' I say, they are men. 'Just slaves!' Not at all; they live under the same roof. 'Slaves!' No, simple friends. 'Slaves!' Think for a moment and you'll realise they're our fellow slaves: Fate can do just what she likes with us and with them.

That's why I find it very amusing to hear people say that it is undignified for a man to have a meal with his slave. So why is it undignified? Because 'smart society' says that a master must be surrounded by crowds of slaves at the dinner table. They must stand there while he stuffs so much food down his throat that his stomach can hardly bear the load and finally rebels: he wears himself out more by throwing the whole lot up than he did by shoving it all down. While this is going on, the slaves must stand absolutely silent: not a word must pass their lips – and no food, either. The smallest noise is beaten back with a stick; the slaves are even beaten for letting slip a cough or a sneeze or a hiccup.

The slightest sound is punished most severely. And they have to stand there all night long, starving and mute. The outcome of all this is a household of slaves who cannot speak in front of their master's face – so they all talk behind his back. In the good old days, when slaves could talk quite freely in front of their master, even enjoy a conversation with him, they were quite prepared to face the executioner on his behalf and bear the brunt of any danger that might be threatening him. At dinner they were always willing to talk; under torture they never uttered a word. You must have heard the saying 'count every slave your enemy' – well, it's arrogance like this which started that one on its rounds. They are not our enemies when they join our households: we turn them into our enemies.

So treat your slaves kindly and politely; talk to them, discuss things with them, associate with them.

'He's a slave!' people say. But he may think and feel like a free man. 'He's a slave!' they say. Should that be his disgrace? Is there anyone who isn't a slave? Sex is one man's master, money another's, ambition another's. We are all slaves to hope and fear.

Pliny, Letters V.19

I see how kind you are to those who serve you. I can now tell you how fond I am of those who serve me. I can never forget that quotation from Homer, 'How mild he was as a father'. Nor can I forget what we Romans mean when we talk about being the 'Father of the household'. By nature I do not think I am too hard-hearted or too tough. But even if I were, I would be shattered by the illness of my freedman. He must have all the kindness he can be given. As a person, he is honest, dutiful and artistic. I put him down in my account books as a 'comic actor.' And he is very good at it.

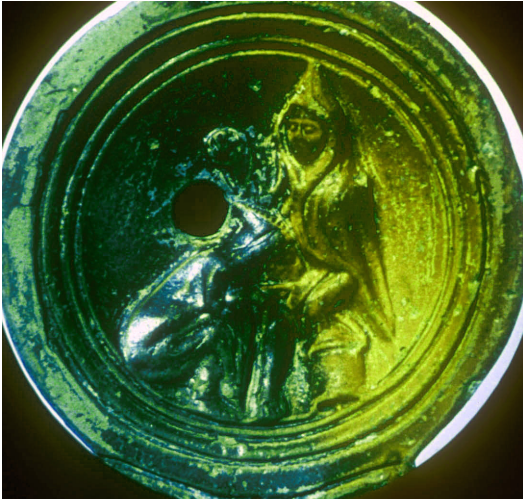
Nothing makes your love grow more than when you are afraid of losing something that you love. That seems to be what everyone would feel in a situation like this. And I myself have been through all this before with him. Some years ago, when he was acting, he strained himself and spat up blood. Because of this he was sent by me to Egypt. He stayed there a long time, recovered and has recently got back. But now he has been using his voice too much and for too long. He has brought up some more blood, although he was warned by a little cough that his old illness was back.

This is the reason why I have decided to send him to your estates at Forum Iulii. I have often heard you talk about them. The air there is refreshing and the milk perfect for treating that sort of problem. I ask you please to write to your servants to open up the house for him. They should also cover any expenses he may have. But knowing him, he will not have many. He is by nature thrifty. He is so careful that he denies himself not only luxuries but also essentials to his cure. When he sets out, I will give him enough for the journey to bring him into your care.

Pliny, Letters VIII.16

I have been worn out by the sickness or death of my slaves, especially if they are young. But I find comfort in two things and they are a real comfort. First of all, it is easy to give some of them their freedom. When I set slaves free, I do not think of them as dying before their time. Secondly I let those who die as slaves make a will. Of course it is not a real 'legal' will. It cannot be, because they are slaves and cannot own anything. I 'own' them. But I treat these 'wills' as if they were real wills. They instruct me and ask me to do what they want. I follow their instructions just as if I really had been told to do so by the law. So they divide out what they have got, they make gifts and leave things. I do not mind so long as it is all kept within my familia. The house is a sort of commonwealth and it makes them feel like citizens.

These two things comfort me and give me some peace. But even so, I am weakened and shattered by the very feelings for humanity which made me act like this in the first place. However I do not want to seem to become more hard-hearted. There are men who do not see the death of a slave as a misfortune. They see it only as good money lost down the drain.



Decorated lamp showing a manumission ceremony

Pliny, Letters VII.29

On the road to Tibur, less than a mile from Rome, as I noticed the other day, there is a monument to Pallas with the following inscription:

‘To him the senate decreed, in return for his loyal services to his patrons, the insignia of a praetor and the sum of fifteen million sesterces, but he thought fit to accept only the honour.’

... This inscription makes me realise what a ridiculous farce it is when they [the honours] can be thrown away on such trash, and that scoundrel could presume to accept and refuse them all, with a show of setting an example of moderation for posterity.

Horace, Satires I.6

Everyone looks down on me as my father was a freedman.

Pliny, Letters III.14

Larcus Macedo, a man who had already been praetor, has been killed by his slaves. He was a proud and cruel master. His father had been a slave. Perhaps he remembered that too little or perhaps too much. Anyway he was being bathed in his house in the country. Suddenly the slaves close in on him. One slave goes for his throat, another smashes him in the face, a third slave hits him in his chest, in his stomach and in his crotch. That’s a terrible thing to have to say.

You can see how we live in danger from our slaves. You can see how our slaves abuse us. You can see how our slaves play deadly games with us. Even if you are a master who is kind and gentle, you still have to worry. Slaves always have two sides to their nature. They act with reason like men. They also act by instinct like animals. It is when their instincts get the better of them that they kill their masters.

Tacitus, Annals XIV.42-5

The prefect of the city, Lucius Pedanius Secundus, was killed by one of his slaves. It had always been the rule from ancient times that, in such a case, all the slaves who lived in the same household had to be put to death. A mob of protesters soon assembled on this occasion, in an attempt to save the lives of so many innocent people. It nearly turned into a full-scale riot and the mob besieged the senate house. Even some of the senators spoke against extreme severity, but most of them were not prepared to change. Such was the case with Gaius Cassius Longinus, who took his turn to speak as follows.

‘An ex-consul has been killed by a slave under his own roof. None of his fellow slaves tried to stop him or betray him. By all means, let them off, but if the prefect of the city is not safe, who is? Pedanius Secundus had four hundred slaves and they were not sufficient to save him, so who can possibly feel safe? No slaves will raise a finger to protect us unless they feel their own lives to be in danger if they fail to do so. People have even said that the slave was justified in murdering his master. If it really was a plot to avenge a wrong, could it have been possible to hatch the whole thing without giving anything away? Even supposing it was a secret, was it possible for him to pass the guards, enter the bedroom, carry in a light and then commit the murder without anyone knowing? Crimes usually advertise themselves; if slaves are vigilant and inform their masters, we have a chance of safety, few though we are, because the slaves will feel their own lives threatened. If we have to die, at least we will know that the guilty will be punished.’

No one dared to raise an objection to Cassius’ arguments, but some did protest about the numbers involved, about innocent children and women, about the fact that most were not actually guilty. But those who supported execution carried the day. Despite this, huge crowds assembled carrying torches and armed with stones, and succeeded in stopping the execution.

Tombstone (CIL.VI 18109)

To the spirits of the departed
and to Titus Flavius Homerus,
a well-deserving ex-master, Titus
Flavius Hyacinthus erected this tomb.

Tombstone

To the spirits of the departed
and to Julius Vitalis,
a well-deserving
freedman, his ex-master erected this tomb.

Tombstone

To the spirits of the departed
Titus Flavius Cerialis
erected this tomb for Flavia Philaenis
his well-deserving
freedwoman and wife.

Tombstone (CIL VI.18152)

To the spirits of the departed
Titus Flavius Eumolpus
and Flavia Quinta built
this tomb for themselves
and their freedmen
and freedwomen
and their descendents.

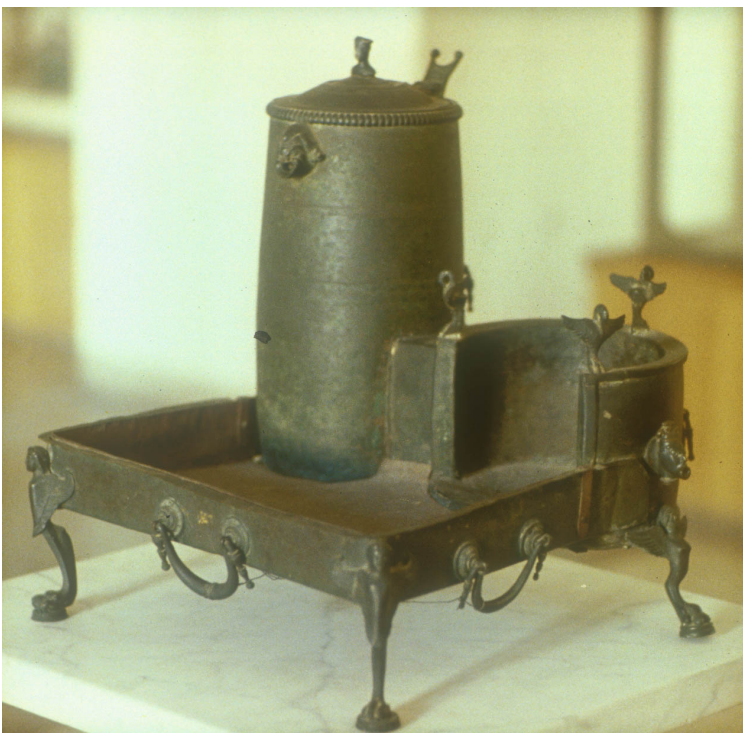
Cooking and meals, including a dinner party



Reconstruction of a kitchen in the British Museum



Trivets and pots, House of the Vettii, Pompeii



Water heater, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples



Wall-painting depicting fish, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples



Mosaic depicting fish, triclinium, House of the Faun, Pompeii

Apicius

Prepare the fish carefully. Put salt and coriander seeds into a bowl and pound them together. Roll the fish in this, place it in a pan, cover it and seal it before cooking in the oven. Sprinkle the fish with vinegar and serve.

Apicius

Boil the ham with plenty of dried figs and three bay leaves. Remove the skin, make criss-cross incisions in the fat and fill these with honey. Make a pastry with flour and oil and cover the ham with this. Bake in the oven and when it is ready, serve as it is.



Carbonised loaf of bread and a bowl of eggs found in Pompeii, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples



Wall-painting depicting a rabbit and a chicken now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples



Wall-painting of a basket of figs, Oplontis, Italy

Martial, Epigrams XI.52

You'll have a nice meal, Julius, at my house; do come if you've nothing better to do. Keep the eighth hour (two o'clock) free; we'll go to Stephanus' baths beforehand, just next door. For starters you'll get lettuce, fresh young leeks, then salted tunny-fish a little bigger than a mackerel and garnished with eggs done up with rue; then more eggs, this time baked to a turn in a moderate oven with cheese and olives. For the main course, you can have fish and oysters, sow-belly, chicken and duck. I promise I won't recite anything, but you can read me your poem 'The Giants' again, or recite some of the ones about the countryside.

Pliny, Letters I.15

What do you mean by accepting my invitation to dinner and then not turning up? It was all set out, a lettuce each, three snails, two eggs, barley-water, wine with honey, chilled with snow (an expensive item, please note, since it disappears in the dish!), some olives, beetroots, gherkins, onions and plenty of other delicacies as well. You could have had a comic play, a poetry reading, or a singer. But no, instead you preferred to go where you could have oysters, sow's innards, sea-urchins and Spanish dancing girls!



Relief showing a banquet, Isel, Germany



Relief showing a banquet from a funerary monument, Amiternum, Italy

Martial, Epigrams V.78

If you don't fancy the idea of eating on your own, you can grab a bite with me. If you'd like something for starters, how about a Cappadocian lettuce, nice and cheap, some rather strong leeks, or some sliced eggs stuffed with tunny fish?

For the main course, fresh-picked broccoli from the garden, saveloy and pease pudding with pale beans and pink bacon, all served up on a black earthenware dish (mind you don't burn your fingers!)

For dessert, I can offer you ripe grapes, Syrian pears and slow-roasted chestnut from clever old Naples. No vintage wine, but just by drinking it you'll make it a good one.

After you've finished all that, the wine may well make you fancy seconds; in which case some choice Picenian olives will fill you up, together with some hot chickpeas and warm lupins.

It's a pretty scanty snack – no point in denying it – but you won't need to put on an act (no one else will), just relax, be yourself. I won't bore you with endless readings from my latest book; there won't be any cheap strippers from Cadiz, writhing their way through their paces. Instead, Condylus, my slave, will amuse us with a jolly tune or two on the pipes. Well, that's it! I'll invite Claudia; whom shall I invite for you?

Juvenal, Satires V

And what a dinner it turns out to be! The wine's so foul you couldn't even soak wool in it to make poultices, and it turns all the guests into raving drunks. They start hurling insults and then for good measure some mugs - soon you're wiping the blood from your wounds with your serviette, while the cheap crockery flies everywhere, and the battle rages between you and a mob of ex-slaves. Meanwhile your host is drinking real vintage stuff, bottled for centuries, but he wouldn't send so much as a glassful to a friend with indigestion. And tomorrow he'll be drinking the best of the vintages, wine so old you can't even read the date and label on the jar because of the soot from the fires of so many years past; the sort of wine that philosophers would choose to toast the assassins of tyrants.

Virro, your host, drinks from cups studded with precious stones, but they don't trust you with gold, or if they do, a slave stands guard to count the jewels and keep an eye on your sharp fingernails. You'll have to excuse him, though, for his collection of gems is quite a talking point. For, you see, Virro has transplanted his stones from his fingers to his wine cups – our legendary ancestors wore theirs in their sword sheaths. But you'll have to drink out of four-spouted cups (named after Nero's favourite cobbler, the one with the long nose!). They all need cement to mend the cracks in their glass.

If your host's stomach gets a bit over-heated with all the wine and food, they'll bring him purified water, chilled like a northern winter. Just now I complained because you don't get the same wine as he does: you don't get the same water, either. An African stable boy brings yours, or a black Moroccan with bony fingers – someone you wouldn't want to meet on a dark night on your way up the Latin hill past all the tombstones. But your host has the flower of Asian youth waiting on him. This flawless young man costs more than the combined treasuries of all the old Roman kings; hardly surprising he doesn't mix the drinks for the riff-raff, with a market value like that. But he's so beautiful and so young, you might even excuse his air of superiority.

You'll have to attract the attention of your African drinks waiter if you fancy a drink; that's if he makes it round to you. And if he does, will he bring you the hot or cold water you asked for? As a matter of fact he thinks it's really beneath him to pander to the whims of some doddering old hanger-on; he thinks you've got a nerve asking for anything, even to recline while he's on his feet.

Every great house has its supply of these arrogant minions. Look, here's another one, moaning away as he gives out the bread – and the stuff's so tough you can hardly break it, rock-hard lumps of mouldy old dough that will give your molars something to think about, for you'll not be able to sink your teeth into it. Your host gets the freshly baked loaf, made from the finest white flour, but don't make a grab for it; you must show a healthy respect for the bread basket. If you do get above yourself and take a piece, there's always someone to make you put it down: 'Fill up from your own basket, cheeky! You must learn which side your bread is buttered on!' 'Was it worth it?' you say to yourself. 'Up at the crack of dawn, leave the wife in bed, charge up the freezing cold, hilly streets where the nobs live, April showers and hailstorms bucketing down and streaming off my cloak. Every morning the same: was it all for this?'

Just look at that huge lobster, asparagus garnish, and all the trimmings; the whole effect lends a certain distinction to a dish fit for the host. Even the tail looks down on us from the dish carried in by that tall slave. All you get is a very tiny portion of 'oeuf à la crevette' (one miserable shrimp stuffed into half a boiled egg). People put that sort of thing in tombs, for the dead. He always pours the finest dressing over his fish, but the stuff you get all over your washed-out cabbage comes straight from the oil lamps. It came up the Tiber on some native barge, all the way from Africa; with that stench no wonder everyone keeps well away from those 'overseas visitors' at the baths – it will even protect you against poisonous snakes.

Your host is served mullet, specially imported from Corsica or Sicily. Our own home fishing grounds have been trawled to the depths to feed the greedy jaws of Rome; we don't even let fish grow to full size. We have to import from the provinces to keep the kitchens of Rome supplied. Legacy-hunters buy first-class imported fish for the ageing spinsters they hope to impress; and the spinsters, suitably impressed, sell it back to the fish market for no small profit. A lamprey is served up to Virro – the best to come from the Sicilian straits. Provided there's no south wind to

whip up the waters, reckless fishermen will brave the dangers of the Straits. For you, an eel (looks more like a water snake) or a grey spotted pike, spawned in the Tiber, well used to growing fat in the teeming sewers under the city slums.

I should like a word or two with our host – if he can spare the time to listen: 'No one's asking for the kind of generosity the old-time aristocrats showed to their less well-heeled friends; in those days a reputation for giving was worth more than a string of titles. The only thing we want is for you to eat with us on equal terms. Do this and, for all we care, you can follow the crowd: keep your money to yourself and plead poverty to your friends.' The next course for your host is a huge goose liver followed by an indoor-fattened fowl as big as the goose itself, and then piping hot roast boar, well worth the attention of any legendary boarhunter. Next, if they're in season and the weather's been favourable, there'll be truffles. Any experienced diner will tell you: 'Africa! Keep your corn, keep your oxen; just send us truffles!'

Meanwhile you'll be treated to a sight of the carver leaping about like a ballet-dancer, waving his knife, following all his master's instructions (he wants to make sure you have every cause for complaint). It makes all the difference in the world how you carve a hare or a chicken.

And if you try to corner the conversation as though you had a good old Roman name, you'll be bounced out of the door faster than Hercules got rid of his enemies. When will Virro ever drink a glass with you, or drink from one touched by your lips? Who would be so rash, so bold as to shout: 'Cheers!' to your host? There are so many things that down-at-heel men cannot say. But suppose a god, or some godlike genie, more generous than Fate, made you a present of the cash required to climb up the social ladder – suddenly, from a mere nothing, you've become Virro's closest friend.

'Give Trebius some of this! Bring some of that for Trebius! Another helping of loin from the boar, my brother?' But it's the cash he really respects, your bank balance which is his real relation. If your ambition is to be such a master, such a patron yourself, make sure there are no small charming children playing in your house to inherit your money; if your wife can't produce children, that will at least produce pleasant, warmhearted friends. Still, as things stand now, if your wife presents you with three bouncing boys, Virro will be delighted by the noisy offspring, send them baby clothes, little nuts, and a coin or two if you want, whenever the little beggars appear at his dinner table.

For the lower-class diners some dodgy-looking toadstools are served, while Virro gets a fine mushroom – exactly like those Claudius enjoyed, just before he ate the poisoned one his wife served up, which cured his need for food for ever.

For dessert Virro and his equals eat apples whose every scent is a feast, whose quality matches those from some fertile fairyland; apples which might easily have been stolen from the golden fruit of evening. You get a worm-rotten apple, like those chewed by performing monkeys who are trained to ride on goats' backs as a circus act you can see on the embankment.

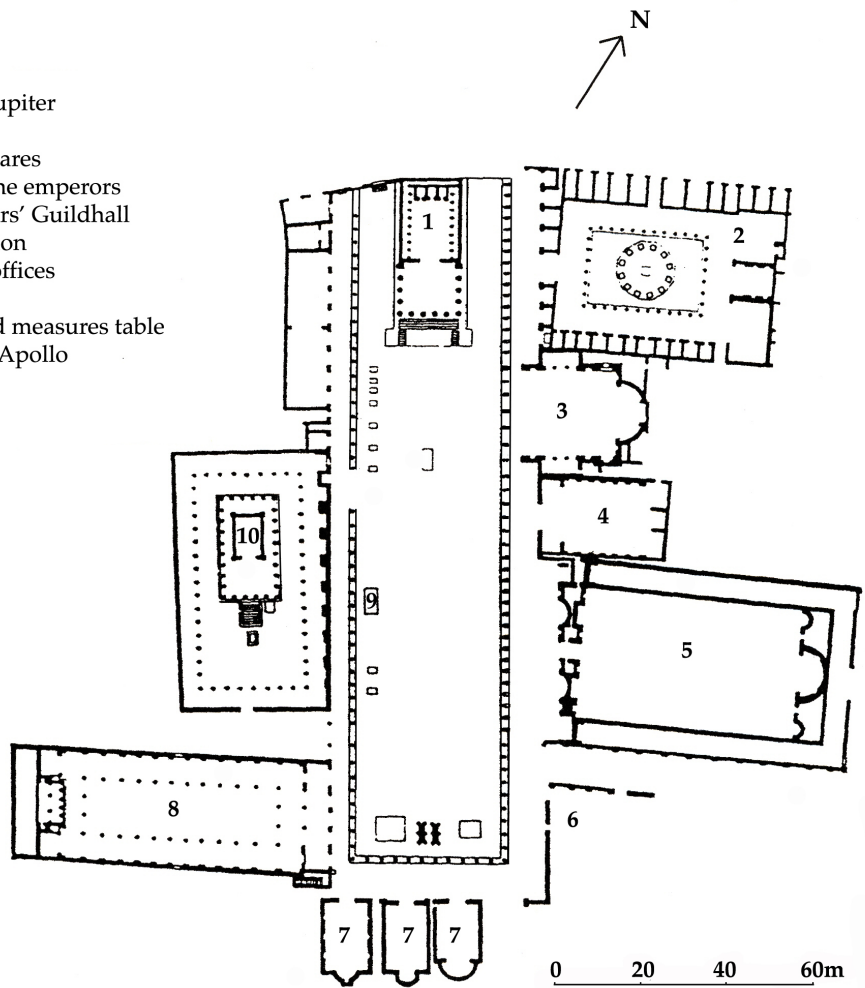
Now you may think to yourself that Virro's just a miser. No chance! He enjoys seeing you suffer. No comedy or pantomime is funnier than the sound of your growling, grumbling stomach. Didn't you hear it the first time? His idea of a good time is to hear you wailing your eyes out and gnashing your teeth with anger. You see, you think you're a free man, a guest at some great man's dinner party; he thinks that the greatest attraction for you is the delicious smell of his kitchen – and he's not so wide of the mark. There's no free man, rich or poor, who would put up with that treatment more than once. You deceive yourself into thinking you'll get a good dinner: 'The remains of a hare, or some slices from the boar's haunches, some small portion of a fattened bird; any minute now we'll be served something like this.' So you all sit there, saying nothing, with your uneaten bread at the ready. He knows what he's doing, treating you like this. You deserve all you get, if you put up with this sort of thing. It won't be long before you shave your head bald and let others slap it, just like some circus stooge; you'll even get used to the sting of the whip; yes, you'll be a fit dinner guest for such a 'friend'.



Thermopolium, Street of the Shops, Pompeii

The forum

- 1 Temple of Jupiter
- 2 Market
- 3 Temple of Lares
- 4 Temple of the emperors
- 5 Clothworkers' Guildhall
- 6 Polling station
- 7 Municipal offices
- 8 Basilica
- 9 Weights and measures table
- 10 Temple of Apollo



Plan of the forum, Pompeii



The forum at Pompeii



The north-west end of the forum at Pompeii



Central section of the forum at Pompeii



The basilica at Pompeii



Senate House, Rome



Temple of Apollo on the north-east side of the forum at Pompeii



Weights and measures table on the south-west side of the forum at Pompeii

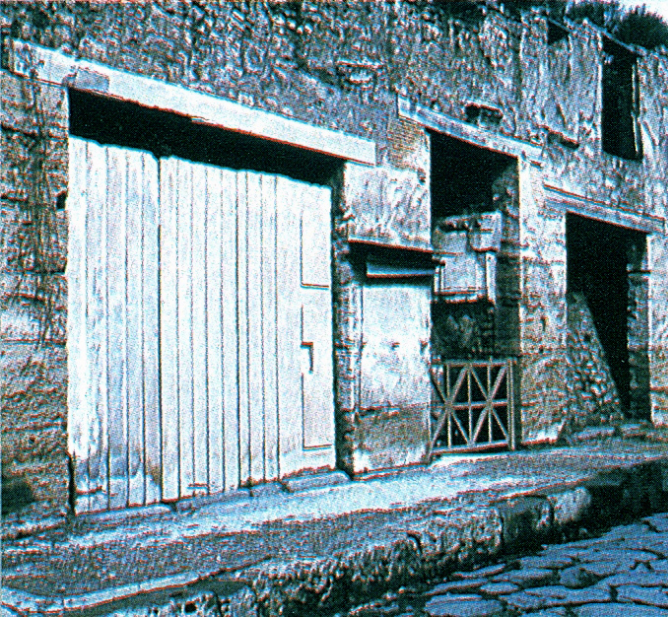
Graffito, Pompeii
Casellius for aedile.

Graffito, Pompeii
We want Titus Claudius Verus for duovir.

Graffito, Pompeii
Innkeepers, vote for Sallustius Capito!

Graffito, Pompeii
Vote for Gnaeus Helvius Sabinus as aedile. He deserves public office.

Graffito, Pompeii
Macerior requests the aedile to stop people from making a noise and disturbing decent folk who are asleep.



Shop sign of a dairy near the forum, Pompeii

Cast of the shutters of a shop near the forum, Pompeii



Serving jugs, Asellina's bar, near the forum, Pompeii



Asellina's bar, near the forum, Pompeii

Schools

Pliny, Letters IV.13 (CSCP translation)

When I went to my home town the other week, the young son of a citizen came to pay his respects to me. I said to him,

'Do you go to school?'

'Yes.'

'Where?'

'Milan.'

'Why do you not go here?'

His father who was with him said, 'Because we don't have any teachers.' There were many other fathers who happened to be listening as well. 'Why don't you have any?' said I. 'You fathers ought to know how important it is that your children should study here rather than anywhere else. Their own town is the most pleasant place for them to be. In their own town they can be properly brought up under the very eyes of their parents. It also costs less. It doesn't take much to set up a fund and hire teachers. Pay them what you spend on lodgings, fares to and from Milan, and all the other things that children have to buy because they are not at home. When you are not at home you have to buy everything. No, I'll go further. You know that I do not have any children of my own but I think of our town as a daughter or a parent. I am willing to give you a third of whatever money you raise.'

I would have promised to give them all of it but I was afraid someone one day would take advantage of my generosity. I see this happening everywhere where teachers are hired by towns, and there is only one remedy for it. Parents must be the only ones with the right to hire teachers. If they have to find the money to pay teachers, they will be careful to choose good ones.



Relief showing a teacher and pupils, Trier, Germany

Pliny, Letters II.18

Pliny has been asked to search for a teacher for the sons of a friend. They have probably finished school with the grammaticus and need classes with a rhetor.

What more pleasant a job could you ask me to do than to look for a tutor for your brother's children? Thanks to you I am returning to school and am reliving the happiest days of my life.

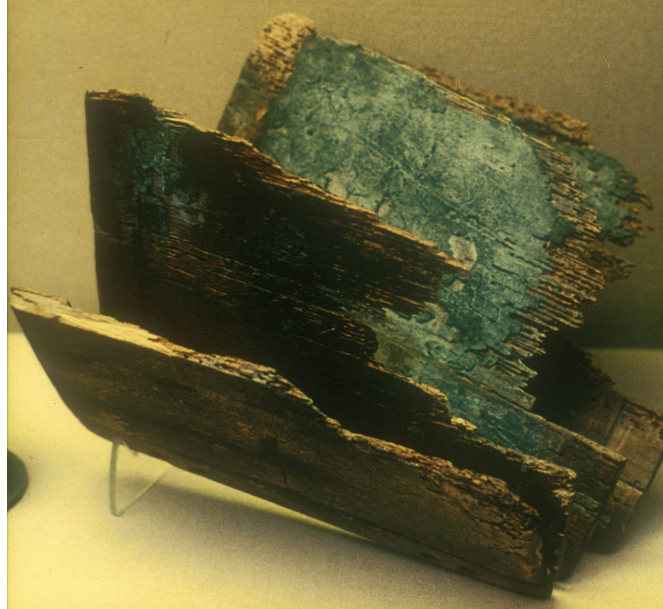
Now all I have to do is to give you my opinion when I have heard all the teachers, and to make you feel you have heard them yourself, as far as I can manage in a letter.

Martial, Epigrams IX.68

What have you to do with us, wicked schoolmaster, hated by boys and girls alike? The crested cockerels have not yet broken the silence and you are already thundering on with your cruel, continuous roaring and beatings. Bronze echoes just as loudly as you when the anvil is struck, and the shouting rages more gently in the amphitheatre when the supporters cheer on the winning gladiator. We, the neighbours, do not ask to sleep all night. It is a small matter to stay awake, but serious to stay awake all night. Dismiss your pupils. Are you willing to receive as much to be quiet, chatterbox, as you do to shout?



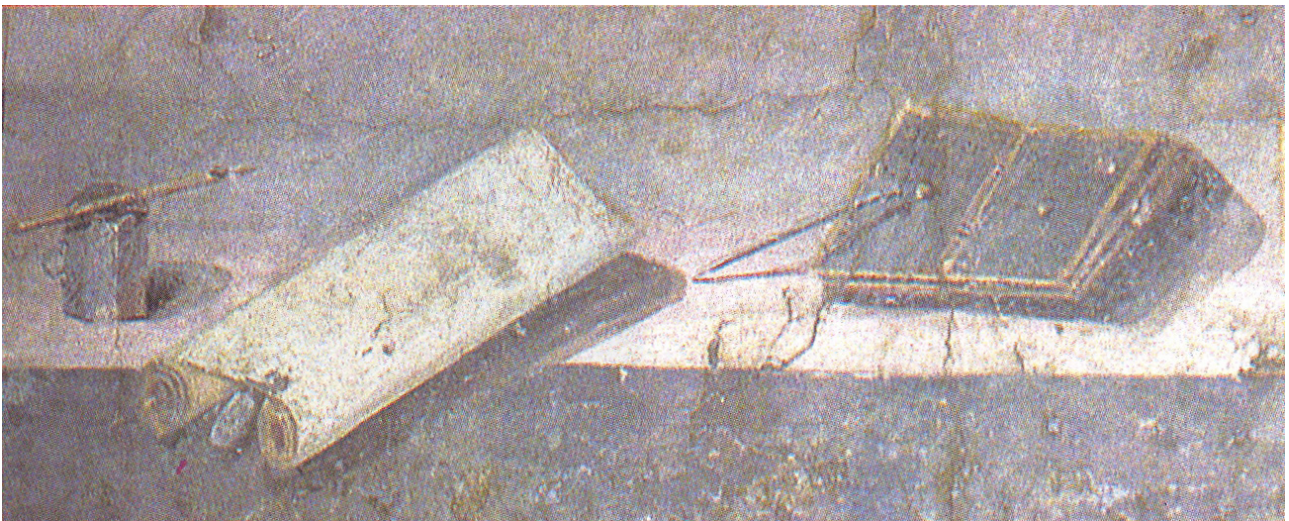
Statuette of a teacher,
now in the Colchester
Castle Museum



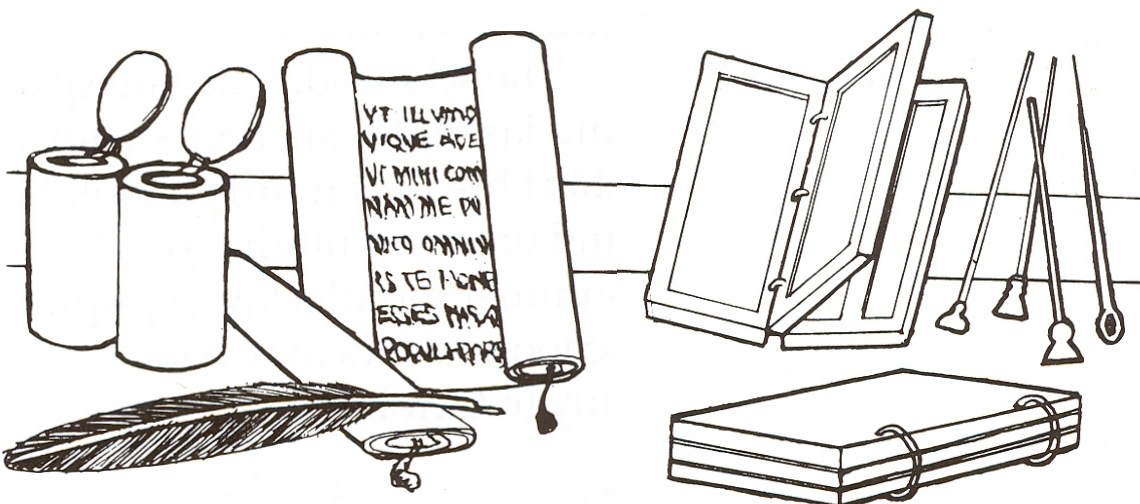
Tabulae



Stili



Wall-painting depicting writing materials, now in the Museo Archaeologico Nazionale, Naples



Writing materials