

THE STAGES AND DIVISION OF ROMAN EDUCATION

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OF  
ROMAN EDUCATION

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TEACHING  
OF THE *LUDI MAGISTER* AND THE *GRAMMATICUS*

by  
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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: From a survey of evidence from the seventh century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. it is contended that Roman education was divided into technical training for the lower-classes in the *ludus litterarius*, and liberal teaching for the upper-classes which was regarded as beginning with the *grammaticus*.

## PREFACE

The scope of this work has made the use of editions and texts from one series alone impossible. Accessibility has dictated the choice of editions, which have been on occasion neither the most recent nor authoritative. However, where textual problems may affect interpretation they have been noted. Editions used have been recorded in the bibliography. Where more than one edition of the same work is mentioned, quotations and references are drawn from the first cited edition.

Unfortunately I had not access to the most recent edition of *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* by H. I. Marrou. My references to this work, which is now the standard text-book for ancient education, are to the second edition. The third edition has been translated into English by G. Lamb, and I was able to use this work to ensure that material quoted or cited had not been radically altered in the later edition.

For the sake of clarity all quotations have been italicized. For quick reference a glossary of Latin educational terms has been provided at the end of this work. Abbreviations for the titles of journals and periodicals follow the system of *L'année philologique*. Abbreviations

for the names of ancient authors, their works and modern collections of the same have been taken from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. In the case of well-known collections, such as *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, edited by Hermann Dessau, references have been indicated by the editor's surname followed simply by the number of the inscription, thus: Dessau 1934. Other abbreviations are as follows:

*Corp. Gloss. Lat.*

*Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*,  
edited by G. Goetz. Leipzig:

Teubner, 1892; reprinted

Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965.

Darem.-Saglio

*Dictionnaire des antiquités  
grecques et romaines*. Compilé  
sous la direction de Ch. Daremberg  
et Edm. Saglio. Paris: Hachette,  
[1931].

Some frequent abbreviations for modern works and articles are:

Marrou, *Hist. éduc.*

*Histoire de l'éducation dans  
l'antiquité* by H. I. Marrou.  
2nd ed. Paris: Éditions du Seuil,  
1950.

Wilkins, *Roman Educ.*

*Roman Education* by A. S. Wilkins.

Cambridge: University Press, 1905.

Gwynn, *Roman Educ. from Cic. to Quint.*

*Roman Education from*

*Cicero to Quintilian*, by Aubrey O.

Gwynn. Oxford: Clarendon Press,

1926; reprinted New York, Columbia

University: Teachers College Press,

n.d.

Best, "The Lit. Rom. Soldier" "The Literate Roman Soldier", by

E. E. Best. *CJ*, 62 (1966), 122ff.

Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Roman Educ." "Some Technical Terms in

Roman Education", by E. W. Bower.

*Hermes*, 89 (1961), 462ff.

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## INTRODUCTION

The idea that the Roman educational system had three grades has gained general acceptance among scholars. Most writers on this subject state that a Roman child attended the school of the *ludi magister* between the ages of seven and twelve, the school of the *grammaticus* from twelve to fifteen and, finally, the school of the *rhetor*.<sup>1</sup> These steps are often compared to modern primary, secondary and higher education.<sup>2</sup> Occasionally it is admitted that the divisions are not always clear cut,<sup>3</sup> but a certainty prevails about the existence of three stages.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See e.g. H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (2nd ed.; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1950), pp. 359-60; A. S. Wilkins, *Roman Education* (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), pp. 50, 55; T. J. Haarhoff, "Education", *OCD*; J. J. Eyre, "Roman Education in the Late Republic and Early Empire", *G&R*, 2nd ser., 10 (1963), 53; D. A. Kidd, *Roman Attitudes to Education* (New Zealand: Christchurch, Classical Association Publications, 1958), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>See e.g. M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Classical Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1951), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>See p. 38 fn. 1. Doubts refer only to 4th & 5th cent. Gaul.

<sup>4</sup>This is well illustrated by E. W. Bower's comment ("Some Technical Terms in Roman Education", *Hermes*, 89 (1961), 469): *The three stages of Roman education are of course well-established and admit of no dispute.*

E. Jullien, writing in the last century, concluded that the threefold division dated from the third century A.D. at least,<sup>1</sup> and, as we shall see, principal evidence for a three-tier system occurs in authors dating from the third century A.D.<sup>2</sup> However, now most scholars would date the establishment of the threefold system from the late Republic.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes a child had a private tutor for one or more of the stages, but at least one prominent scholar asserts the attendance at three schools in succession,<sup>4</sup> as a rule.

It is this conception of a threefold division which I propose to examine. In my view, the evidence which forms the basis for this idea, does not justify the general certainty about its correctness. I intend to trace the relationship between the first two grades from their beginnings to the time when monastic schools encroached upon the truly Roman educational system and hope to show that:

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<sup>1</sup>*Les professeurs de littérature dans l'ancienne Rome et leur enseignement depuis l'origine jusqu'à la mort d'Auguste* (Paris: Leroux, 1885), pp. 17-20.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 4ff.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. e.g. works cited p. 1 fn. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Marrou, *Hist. éduc.*, p. 361.

- (1) the modern schematic division between so-called primary and secondary education is misleading as are the age limits generally associated with this division;
- (2) the upper-classes usually began their schooling or education with a *grammaticus*;
- (3) the *ludi litterarii*, the so-called primary schools, were technical or vocational schools attended by the lower classes.

The ancient evidence for such a study is of limited assistance. Until the Empire evidence is in no way plentiful and even then comes from sources differing in date and place of origin. Therefore, I shall assume that the educational system developed with some uniformity throughout the Roman world and that customs and institutions did not alter rapidly. The noted conservatism of the Romans, in my opinion, justifies this assumption.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE THREE-STAGE THEORY

Evidence for the systematic nature of Roman education is sparse. A few pieces of evidence have suggested a three-tier system, and on this basis scholars have postulated a general three-stage division and have formulated accompanying age limits. It will be well at the outset to show the basis of the modern conception with special reference to the first two supposed grades. Then, in a review of the evidence from earliest times to the collapse of the Roman Empire it will be suggested that the existing evidence admits of no absolutely certain conclusions, and that an alternative scheme of division is both possible and more probable.

Four principal passages, from Apuleius, the *Historia Augusta* lives of Marcus Aurelius and Severus Alexander, and from Augustine, are quoted to support a theory of three stages in education, and are taken to indicate that the first step was under the *ludi magister*, *litterator* or *primus magister*, the second under the *grammaticus*, the third under the *rhetor*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Philosophy was a possible further step in education. For the validity of the *Historia Augusta* as evidence for education see p. 104f.

Apuleius begins a description of his own education and the high standard of education at Carthage as follows:

*Sapientis viri super mensam celebre dictum est: 'prima, inquit, creterra ad sitim pertinet, secunda ad hilaritatem, tertia ad voluptatem, quarta ad insaniam'. verum enimvero Musarum creterra versa vice quanto crebrior quantoque meracior, tanto propior ad animi sanitatem. prima creterra litteratoris rudimento excitat, secunda grammatici doctrina instruit, tertia rhetoris eloquentia armat.*<sup>1</sup>

But Apuleius is speaking in highly allegorical language. It is possible, therefore, that he named three parts of education he knew to match the stages of drunkenness in the *sententia*, without meaning that all children progressed through these steps. Moreover, the continuation of this passage shows that Apuleius himself had a very full education:

*Ego et alias cre terras Athenis bibi: poeticae comptam, geometriae limpida, musicae dulcem, dialecticae austerulam, iam vero universae philosophiae inexplebilem scilicet et nectaream . . . Apuleius vester haec omnia novemque Musas pari studio colit . . .*

The extent of Apuleius' education seems atypical and one should hesitate to accept any scheme he implies as general.

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<sup>1</sup>*Flor.* 20. The text is corrupt at this point but there is no doubt about the three divisions and teachers.

Marcus Aurelius too, as the following passage shows, had an extremely full education, the whole prescription outlined by Quintilian down to the *comoedus*:<sup>1</sup>

*usus est magistris ad prima elementa Euphorione litteratore et Gemino comoedo, musico Androne eodemque geometra . . . usus praetera grammaticis, Graeco Alexandro Cotiaensi, Latinis Trosio Agro et Eutychio Proculo Sicensi, oratoribus usus est . . .*<sup>2</sup>

The list of teachers is so full and specialized that his education may be viewed as atypical.

The same objection is valid in the case of Severus Alexander. He had an abnormal number of teachers, three for elementary learning alone, and his unusual devotion to study is specifically mentioned:

*Alexander igitur . . . a prima pueritia artibus bonis imbutus tam civilibus quam militaribus ne unum quidem diem sponte sua transire passus est quo se non et ad litteras et ad militiam exerceret. nam in prima pueritia litteratores habuit Valerium Cordum et T. Venturium et Aurelium Philippum libertum patris . . . grammaticum in patria Graecum Nehonem, rhetorem Serapionem, philosophum Stilionem, Romae grammaticos Scaurinum Scaurini filium, doctorem celeberrimum, rhetores Iulium Frontinum et Baebium Macrianum et Iulium Granianum.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The employment of a *comoedus* is suggested by Quintilian (1.1.9) but it seems certain that this suggestion was rarely put into practice. Quintilian and this life of Marcus Aurelius are the only places I know of where a *comoedus* teacher is mentioned.

<sup>2</sup>*S.H.A. M. Ant.* 2.2f.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid., Sev. Alex.* 3.1f.

I would like to point out that the term for primary teacher in these three passages is *litterator*. Textbooks usually give this as the common name for such a teacher. However, E.W. Bower has shown that *litterator* was usually an alternative name for the *grammaticus*.<sup>1</sup> In fact, only one other passage contains this usage.<sup>2</sup> Bower proceeds to demonstrate that the *Scriptores* otherwise use *litterator* = *grammaticus*.<sup>3</sup> Was the three-fold division so unusual that a term had to be used with a strange nuance of meaning to describe it? The writers may well have avoided the names *ludi litterarii magister* or *primus magister* or *librarius* because of their lowly connotations and perhaps in view of the fact that these people normally taught the lower classes in a public school.<sup>4</sup>

Augustine, it is true, mentions his attendance at the *primus magister* as opposed to the *grammaticus*;

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<sup>1</sup>"Some t. t's in Rom. Educ.", 469-474.

<sup>2</sup>FPL p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Bower, *ibid.*, 469.

<sup>4</sup>See chapter 5.

*adamaveram enim latinas [sc. litteras], non quas primi magistri sed quas docent qui grammatici vocantur. nam illas primas, ubi legere et scribere et numerare discitur, non minus onerosas poenalesque habebam quam omnes graecas.*

It seems that Augustine did not follow what I shall argue to be the normal upper-class trend of beginning with the *grammaticus*<sup>2</sup>. One reason which may be suggested is that his father, though a decurion, is said to have been of low financial standing. More important perhaps is the fact that Augustine had to go from Tagaste to Madaura to attend a *grammaticus*<sup>3</sup>. So it would seem probable that his father could not afford a private *grammaticus-ludi magister* to train his son in his early years, and, as there seem to have been no public schools of *grammatice* at Tagaste, Augustine first attended an elementary school and, when he was older, went on to the school of a *grammaticus* away from home. It is significant, I think, that Possidius, Augustine's friend and biographer, emphasizes the liberal side of his education, by which he clearly means *grammatice* and rhetoric, and ignores the primary stage:

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<sup>1</sup>*Conf.* 1.13.

<sup>2</sup>See chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup>*Cf.* Migne, PL 32, 67: *ludimagistro traditus est, primis imbuendis litterarum elementis (Conf. I. 9 14) . . . Madauras, vicinam urbem, litteraturae atque oratoriae artis percipiendae gratia missus est (Conf. 2. 3. 5).*



*alitusque ac nutritus eorum [sc. parentum] cura, et diligentia impensisque secularibus litteris eruditus apprime, omnibus videlicet disciplinis imbutus, quae liberales vocant. Nam et grammaticam prius in sua civitate et rhetoricam in Africae capite Carthagine postea docuit.*<sup>1</sup>

Of course there will have been others like Augustine who went to a *ludus litterarius* and subsequently to the school of a *grammaticus*. Augustine's remark about *litteras quas primi magistri docent* does imply that a child attended first a *ludi magister* then a *grammaticus*. But we should beware of taking the implication of *primus* here to form a standard rule. I shall show that there is sufficient evidence to believe that the upper-class children began schooling with the *grammaticus*<sup>2</sup> and that the *ludus litterarius* was a sort of technical school.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable that most poor children ended their education here, and used their acquired skill to find employment. So, although Augustine talks about *primi magistri*, he is probably thinking of his own education, and he may be the exception rather than the rule in attending a *ludus litterarius* before

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, 35. ,

<sup>2</sup>See chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup>See chapter 5.

progressing to a school of a *grammaticus*.

In fact, Augustine is the only author who uses the term *primus magister* in this sense. Marrou cites an inscription as a parallel to this usage: *Ianuara coiugi bene merenti Gorgono magistro primo*.<sup>1</sup> This person may not have been a schoolteacher, but a soldier, for from another inscription we read of a Flavius Hariso who was: *magister primus de numero Erolorum seniorum*.<sup>2</sup> The significance of the rank of *magister primus* in the army is not known. It has been suggested that it was that of a sort of *campidoctor*, the regimental sergeant major.<sup>3</sup> It is just possible that *primi magistri* were academic teachers, and we know of other *magistri*, whose duties are unspecified, but who may have been engaged in the same business. These people may have trained recruits as *librarii*.<sup>4</sup> However, there were military *magistri* who commanded rather than taught (*magister equitum, peditum, militae*) and others who taught the arts of the sword rather than those of the pen (*magister gladiatorius, m. ballistarius*).

<sup>1</sup>Diehl 720.

<sup>2</sup>Diehl 464 = Dessau 2801.

<sup>3</sup>Darem.-Saglio, 3, 1521. For *campidoctor* see e.g. Vegetius *De re militari* 1.13; 3. 8.

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 143ff.; 156f.

*Magister* could be used of a person in charge of almost anything<sup>1</sup> and Augustine, therefore, may well be alone in calling *ludi magistri* by this name.

There are a few other passages which may more tenuously suggest a threefold division in education. Apuleius tells us of Plato's education: *doctores habuit in prima litteratura Dionysium; at in palaestra Aristonem.*<sup>2</sup> Plato will have attended school in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C. at Athens when the Greek educational system was in the process of being formed. This system under which Plato was taught is not convincing evidence for that used at a much later date in the Roman Republic and Empire.

Martial mentions three teachers:

*non rhetor, non grammaticus ludive magister*<sup>3</sup>.

This might be taken as a list of teachers in descending order representing three stages of Roman education, but the next lines read:

*non Cynicus, non tu Stoicus esse potes,  
vendere nec vocem Siculis plausumque theatris.*

<sup>1</sup>E.g. *vicimagister*, *scripturae m. pectoris m.*, *auctionis m.*, *navis m.*, *collegii m.*, *elephanti m.*

<sup>2</sup>*De dog. Plat.* 1.2.

<sup>3</sup>7.64.7.

Martial is giving a rather random list of professions and it seems probable that he merely listed three kinds of teachers which came to his mind, to which he added philosophers and hired applauders.

An account of Pertinax's education reads as follows:

*Puer litteris elementariis et calculo imbutus, datus etiam Graeco grammatico atque inde Sulpicio Apollinari, post quem idem Pertinax grammaticen professus est.*<sup>1</sup>

Sulpicius Apollinaris was a *grammaticus Latinus*<sup>2</sup> so that we see two stages of education here, primary and secondary. But, as with Marcus Aurelius and Severus Alexander, one would expect a Roman child from a family of very high standing to have had a special education. Moreover, here it is not clear whether the primary stage was formal. No teachers are mentioned in connection with it. Today it is not unusual for a child to know the alphabet and have some knowledge of figures before beginning school, and this may have been the case with Pertinax.

A passage from Rufinus' translation of Origen's *In Numeros* may be quoted here:.

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<sup>1</sup>*S. H. A. Pert.* 1.4.

<sup>2</sup>As being counterpart to the *g. Graecus*. Cf. too Schanz-Hosius § 597.

Verum ne huiusmodi expositio, quae per Hebraeorum linguam et nominum significantias currit, ignorantibus linguae illius proprietatem adfectata videatur et violenter extorta, dabimus etiam in nostra lingua similitudinem qua consequentiae huius ratio pateat. In litterario ludo, ubi pueri prima elementa suscipiunt, abecedarii dicuntur quidam, alii syllabarii, alii nominarii, alii iam calculatores appellantur . . . et cum audierimus haec nomina, ex ipsis qui sint in pueris profectus agnoscimus. Similiter et in liberalibus studiis, cum aut locum recitare, aut allocutionem, vel laudem, aliasque per ordinem materias audierimus, ex materiae nomine profectum adolescentis advertimus.<sup>1</sup>

At first glance it might be thought that the *ludus litterarius* is seen as a stage which is followed by the *schola grammatici*. An idea of progression from one stage to another has been conveyed in Hebrew terms for which Rufinus offers Latin equivalents. He is showing how we can recognize progress according to grade. He points to the names for classes of children in the *ludus litterarius*, then to the order of studying subjects under the *grammaticus*. But he does not say children progress from one school to the other, and if this were the general scheme of academic progress, it would be strange for him not to point to it for the purposes of the comparison he is drawing. Far from indicating any such progression,

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<sup>1</sup>Migne, PG 12, 583.

Rufinus separates the two sorts of schooling. On the one hand he shows the grades in the *ludus litterarius*. Then he turns to another system of education *Similiter et in liberalibus studiis*. I think we should infer from Rufinus' words that these schools existed as completely separate entities. As I shall argue, the *ludus litterarius* was the schooling of the lower-classes, what is encompassed by *liberalia studia* that of the upper-classes.<sup>1</sup>

Connected with the question of the threefold division is that of the age limits for attending each of these supposed stages. As I indicated<sup>2</sup> the idea has gained a sort of general acceptance that between the ages of 7 and 11 or 12 the child attended the *ludus litterarius* (or was taught by a tutor at home in a way which corresponded to that of the *ludi magister*), between 11 or 12 to about 15 he was taught by the *grammaticus* and afterwards by the *rhetor*. Five years seems an inordinate amount of time to spend in what Quintilian calls *trivialis scientia*.<sup>3</sup> Plautus assures us

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<sup>1</sup>See further pp. 128ff. A passage from Auson. *Protrepticus liber* is sometimes cited as showing three stages of education but, as I will argue, there are only two stages indicated. (See p. 116f.).

<sup>2</sup>See Introd. pp. 1f.

<sup>3</sup>1.4.27.

that even a sheep could be expected to learn ABC in five years:

*nam equidem te iam sector quintum hunc annum, quom interea, credo, oui' si in ludum iret, potuisset iam fieri ut probe litteras sciret, quom interim tu meum ingenium fans atque infans nondum etiam edidicisti.*<sup>1</sup>

And even Plato in his *Republic*, where he is most generous in allotting time to education, gives only three years to primary studies, and his primary curriculum was the same as that in Roman schools -- the alphabet, syllabaries<sup>2</sup> and simple arithmetic<sup>3</sup>. The ancient mind would have felt five years an excessive amount of time to be devoted to such studies.

It will be interesting and instructive to compare here the ancient curriculum with that current in British primary schools. Modern primary education takes five to six years, a comparable period to the supposed time a Roman child spent at the *ludus litterarius*. As in modern schools, Roman children had holidays. We have no really detailed evidence about this, but what indications we have must be reviewed.

<sup>1</sup>*Persa* 172-4.

<sup>2</sup>*Resp.* 3. 402ab; *Pol.* 227e-278b.

<sup>3</sup>*Resp.* 7. 522c, 522e, 525a, 536d, 537a.

Today the pupil has weekends off school to which the Roman *nundinae* seems to have corresponded somewhat. Nonius shows that Roman children had every eighth day off school: *Utri magis sunt pueri? hi pusilli nigri qui spectant nundinas, ut magister dimittat lusum?*<sup>1</sup>

The modern child has Christmas holidays and it seems the week-long *Saturnalia*<sup>2</sup> provided Roman children with a rough equivalent. Pliny says: *Nam tu magister, ego contra; atque adeo tu in scholam revocas, ego adhuc Saturnalia extendo.*<sup>3</sup> Martial also implies a holiday then:

*Iam tristis nucibus puer relictis  
clamoso revocatur a magistro  
.....  
Saturnalia transiere tota,  
nec munuscula parva nec minora  
misisti mihi, Galla, quam solebas.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ed. Lindsay, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>The *Saturnalia* was gradually extended to 7 days. Cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.10: *Abunde iam probasse nos aestimo Saturnalia uno tantum die, id est quarto decimo Kalendarum solita celebrari; sed post in triduum propagata . . . a sextodecimo igitur coepta in quartumdecimum desinunt . . . sed Sigillariorum adiecta celebritas, in septem dies discursum publicum et laetitiam religionis extendit.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ep.* 8.7.1.

<sup>4</sup>*Id.* 84.1-2, 6-8.



The *Quinquatrus*, the festival of Minerva lasting from the 19th to the 23rd March corresponded in some way to modern Easter or spring holidays:

. . . . . *ac potius, puer ut festis Quinquatribus olim,  
exiguo gratoque fruaris tempore raptim.*<sup>1</sup>

*Nempe Minervae tibi sollemne de scholis notum est, ut  
fere memores sumus etiam procedente aetate puerilium  
feriarum.*<sup>2</sup>

Several passages indicate a holiday period in early autumn. Horace remarks:

. . . *dum ficus prima calorque  
dissignatorem decorat lictoribus atris  
dum pueris omnis pater et matercula pallet.*<sup>3</sup>

Horace intends to stay away from Rome for his health during this time. It is possible that schools were also dismissed. Martial appeals:

*ferulaeque tristes, sceptrum paedagogorum,  
cessent et Idus dormiant in Octobres:  
aestate pueri si valent, satis discunt.*<sup>4</sup>

Marrou interprets this passage as follows: *l'usage est bien attesté de vacances d'été de la fin juillet à la mi-octobre.*<sup>5</sup> Although he seems to have read too much into Martial's words, it does not seem improbable that there

<sup>1</sup>Hor. *Epist.* 2.2. 197-8; cf. Ov. *Fasti.* 3. 809-10.

<sup>2</sup>Symmachus *Ep.* 45.83.

<sup>3</sup>Hor. *Epist.* 1.7. 5-8.

<sup>4</sup>10. 62.10-13.

<sup>5</sup>*Hist. éduc.*, p. 363.

were some summer holidays.

Augustine mentions *vindemiales feriae*. He is telling of his decision to relinquish the teaching of rhetoric as it is leading his students away from the contemplation of God. He decides to endure until the near-by holidays: *Et opportune iam paucissimi dies supererant ad vindemiales ferias, et statui tolerare illos.*<sup>1</sup> What exactly *vindemiales feriae* were is not certain. Did his pupils take time off to help with the grape harvest which took place between August and November? The *Digest* mentions the relaxation of legal proceedings *messium vindemiorumque tempore.*<sup>2</sup> The provincial governor had the right of setting this time: *Praesides provinciarum ex consuetudine cuiusque loci solent messis vindemiorumque causa tempus statuere.*<sup>3</sup> These *feriae* seem to have extended over two months, probably August and September as a rule:

*Omnes dies iubemus esse iuridicos. Illos tantum manere feriarum dies fas erit, quos geminis mensibus ad requiem laboris indulgentior annus accepit aestivis fevoribus mitigandis et autumnis fetibus decerpendis.*<sup>4</sup>

However, *vindemiales feriae* might simply refer to a one day festival, the *Vinalia*, celebrated in August

<sup>1</sup> *Conf.* 9.2.

<sup>2</sup> 2.12. 1, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 2.8.19.

and April. Youths attending a school of rhetoric would come from upper-class families, in the main, and would scarcely work in the vineyards. If a holiday in August is meant, this implies that in the era and place in which Augustine taught students were not on continuous holiday from July to October, and I feel that we should not be over-hasty in drawing conclusions from Martial's plea. However, it seems probable that there was some break in lessons in the heat of summer.

Apart from the festivals mentioned above it is possible that others were school holidays too. In the time of Augustus there were some 115 days a year which were business holidays. Ogilvie states that schools and markets remained open on these days.<sup>1</sup> It is true, as can be seen from the legal passages cited, that *feriae*

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<sup>1</sup>*The Romans and their Gods* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), p. 71. Ogilvie does not make it clear on what evidence he basis his assertion. H.W. Johnston [*Private Life of the Romans* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and co., 1903), p. 220] estimates that 66 days were taken up by holidays at the end of the Republic and that this number had increased to 135 in the time of M. Aurelius. T.G. Tucker [*Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 288] estimates the number at about 100 in Nero's time.

involved mainly a remission of legal processes. However, W. Warde-Fowler writes: . . . *the old religious word feriae became gradually supplanted in the sense of public holiday or amusement by the word and came to mean, as it still does in Germany, the holiday of school boys.*<sup>1</sup>

To me it seems likely that on days of parades and *ludi* school children had holidays. In different towns and areas there will have been different festivals,<sup>2</sup> but if we reckon one hundred days of holiday for *nundinae* and the various religious festivals and generously allow two months holiday in the summer (which may not have existed) we would have an estimated 160 days holiday a year. Today British children spend about 200 days a year in school. So it seems that Roman children spent at least as many days there.

Let us now compare the hours *per* day spent at school. In British primary schools pupils have lessons for three hours in the morning for one and a half to two and a half hours in afternoon, making a total of four and a half to five and a half hours daily.

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<sup>1</sup>*Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero.* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1908), p. 288. He is referring to the German *Ferien*.

<sup>2</sup>We can perhaps compare the number of festivals on the school calendar for the city of Cos, where one month had eight holidays, another six. (See Marrou, *Hist. Educ.*, pp. 208-9). Marrou says children had holidays on private family festivals such as birthdays, days of first cutting of hair etc. He does not cite any authority for this, however, and, as today, private ceremonies may not have been celebrated by a full day off school.

There are many references to Roman schools beginning in the early morning. Ovid, addressing the dawn, says;

*Tu pueros somno fraudas tradisque magistris,  
ut subeant tenerae verbera saeva manus.*<sup>1</sup>

Martial also refers often to early morning school:

*Surgite; iam vendit pueris ientacula pistor  
cristataeque sonant undique lucis aves.*<sup>2</sup>

*Quid tibi nobiscum est, ludi scelerate magister  
.....  
nondum cristati rupere silentia galli,<sup>3</sup>  
mumure iam saevo verberibusque tonas.*

*Negant vitam  
ludi magistri mane, nocte pistores.*<sup>4</sup>

Juvenal tells us children began school so early that they had to have lanterns to provide light. Addressing an imaginary Palaemon, he says:

*dummodo non pereat mediae quod noctis ab hora  
sedisti . . .  
.....  
dummodo non pereat totidem olfecisse lucernas,  
quot stabant pueri.*<sup>5</sup>

Augustine tells us the morning was devoted to teaching:

*Antemeridianis horis discipuli occupant; ceteris quid  
facimus?*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Am. 1.13.17-18.

<sup>2</sup>14.223.

<sup>3</sup>9.68.1-4.

<sup>4</sup>12.57.4f.

<sup>5</sup>7.222ff.

<sup>6</sup>Conf. 6.11.18.

Ausonius implies that about six hours were devoted to teaching. The Roman day was twelve hours and he says:

*Quotque doces horis quotque domi resides.*<sup>1</sup>

From this evidence it would seem that six hours starting from dawn or before was the length of a school day. The *Colloquia Scholastica* does mention a recess for lunch, after which the pupil returned, finally leaving school for the baths before his evening meal: *Rogavi ut*

*dimitteret domum ad prandium et ille [sc. magister] me dimisit . . . postquam pranderam reversus reddidi.*<sup>2</sup>

In this case the school day may have been longer than six hours, but for our present purpose it is enough to conclude that the Roman child spent at least as many hours in school as a British child to-day.

Modern children have homework and this, of course, extends their school day past the time spent in school. There is no definite evidence for Roman children being given homework. Quintilian implies study outside formal tuitions although he is talking about students at higher studies:

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<sup>1</sup>*Ep.* 13.10.

<sup>2</sup>*Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 3, 377. 70ff.; cf. *ibid.*, 638.7.

*Neque enim scribenti, ediscenti, cogitanti praeceptor adsistit, quorum aliquid agentibus cuiuscunque interventus impedimento est. Lectio quoque non omnis nec semper praeunte vel interpretante eget. Quando enim tot auctorum notitia contingeret?*<sup>1</sup>

It is not hard to imagine that children learned their tables<sup>2</sup> or simple lines of poetry after school hours.

It has been suggested that the teaching methods and the difficulty of the studies could make a period of five years necessary for this elementary learning.

E.S. McCartney holds that it was difficult for a Roman to learn Latin.<sup>3</sup> He quotes the following *sententia*

of Quintilian: *Quare mihi non invenuste dici videtur*

*aliud esse Latine aliud grammaticae loqui*<sup>4</sup> and favourably

cites E.H. Sturtevant's opinion: *It is safe to say that*

*French children make more rapid progress in learning to*

*talk than Roman children did.*<sup>5</sup> And C.A. Forbes emphasises

<sup>1</sup>1.2.11.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* Hor. Ars. P. 325ff.; August. Conf. 1.13.

<sup>3</sup>"Was Latin difficult for a Roman?," *CJ*, 23 (1927), 163-182.

<sup>4</sup>1.6.45.

<sup>5</sup>*Linguistic Change* (Chicago: University Press, 1947), p. 171.

the thoroughness of Roman teaching methods compared with those current in North America.<sup>1</sup>

At a modern British primary school a child learns more than the 3 R's. History, geography, art, physical training, religious instruction and simple handicrafts are usually taught. However, compared with modern primary education the syllabus of the *ludus litterarius* was meagre. Rufinus has conveniently recorded for us four steps.<sup>2</sup> *Abecedarii* was the name given to children learning the alphabet. Quintilian,<sup>3</sup> while trying to reform (and complicate) the teaching of this, makes it clear that normally it was a simple matter of learning to recite ABC etc. and recognize the shapes.

Next came syllables and the children learning these were called *syllabarii*. The purpose of learning these was to aid pronunciation and spelling by the phonetic break-down of words.<sup>4</sup> One cannot imagine a great period of time devoted to this.

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<sup>1</sup>"Why Roman Johnny could read", *CJ*, 55 (1959), 50-5.

<sup>2</sup>*Trans. of Orig. In Num.* 27.13. Quoted p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>1.1. 24-6.

<sup>4</sup>Quint. 1.1. 30-4.



From syllables, children progressed to words and simple sentences and were now called *nominarii*. They learned to copy and read words and phrases. The standard of reading may not have been high if *lapidarias litteras scio*,<sup>1</sup> the boast of a freedman educated in the rudiments, is any guide. Writing may have taken some time as it seems the teacher had to devote his attention to each pupil individually:

*Pueri ad praescriptum discunt; digiti illorum tenentur et aliena manu per litterarum simulacra ducuntur, deinde imitari iubentur proposita et ad illa reformare chirographum.*<sup>2</sup>

*di avertant principes pueros et patres patriae dici impuberes et quibus ad subscribendum magistri litterarii manus teneant.*<sup>3</sup>

However, Quintilian takes such pains to emphasize the importance of a good script that I wonder whether, in the case of the upper-classes, much time was spent on learning to write properly.<sup>4</sup> Quintilian gives fancy instructions for learning to write and for learning the alphabet, but it is unlikely that these were in general use.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Petron. *Sat.* 58.7.

<sup>2</sup>Sen. *Ep.* 94.51.

<sup>3</sup>*S.H.A. Tac.* 6.

<sup>4</sup>Quint. 1.1.28-9; cf. p. 152.

<sup>5</sup>Quint. 1.1.26-7; cf. Jerome *Ep.* 107.4.

The most advanced *nominarii* presumably took simple dictation also.<sup>1</sup> In some cases Greek was probably taught by the same elementary processes, but the children will already have acquired a speaking knowledge of the language.<sup>2</sup> Even learning to read write and take dictation in two languages, considering the simple standard demanded, can hardly have taken five years.

The fourth and last group Rufinus mentions are *calculatores*. This is the most advanced stage but the arithmetic learned by these pupils was relatively simple -- only that which would suffice for daily use. Cicero, for example, well reflects the Roman attitude to mathematics:

*In summo apud illos [sc. Graecos] honore geometria fuit, itaque nihil mathematicis illustrius; at nos metiendi ratiocinandique utilitate huius artis teminavimus modum.*<sup>3</sup>

While contrasting the literary Greek with the practical Roman, Horace gives us a picture of an arithmetic lesson:

*Romani pueri longis rationibus assem  
discunt in partes centum diducere. 'dicat  
filius Albinus: si de quincunce remota est  
uncia, quid superat? poteris dixisse.' 'triens.' 'eu!  
rem potexis servare tuam. redit uncia, quid fit?'  
'semis.'*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 153ff.

<sup>2</sup>In rich households children will have learned to speak Greek from the children of Greek *vernae* (Cf. Quint. 1.1.8, 12). There is no evidence for the teaching of two languages in the *ludus litterarius*.

<sup>3</sup>*Tusc.* 1.2.5.

<sup>4</sup>*Ars P.* 325 ff.

As Marrou remarks,<sup>1</sup> this is not fractional division in our sense, for a *quincunx* etc. are in Latin not so much numbers as concrete realities. The practical object of the lesson is seen in the words *rem poteris servare tuam* and the next lines:

*an haec animos aerugo et cura peculi  
cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina fingi  
posse linenda cedro et levi servanda cupresso?*

It is the boast of a freedman in the *Satyricon* that his education has been practical. He has not learned higher mathematics: *Non didici geometrias, critica et alogias nenias, sed lapidarias litteras scio, partes centum dico ad aes, ad pondus, ad nummum.*<sup>2</sup>

With this knowledge he was able to follow his teacher's orders: *Sunt vestra salva? recta domum.* Another kind of arithmetic learnt was tables. Augustine complains: *iam vero unum et unum duo, duo et duo quattuor odiosa mihi cantio erat.*<sup>3</sup>

The specialist teacher, the *calculator*,<sup>4</sup> presumably taught advanced arithmetic while the *ludi magister* gave this simple instruction. The fact that

<sup>1</sup>*Hist. educ.*, p. 360.

<sup>2</sup>58.

<sup>3</sup>*Conf.* 1.13.22.

<sup>4</sup>For this teacher see Marrou, *Hist. educ.*, p. 366; pp. 550-1, n.13 and passages there cited. See p. 136 below.

*calculatores* were the highest class in the *ludus litterarius*, taken with the simplicity of the mathematics taught, shows the elementary standard of knowledge demanded of the *abecedarii*, *syllabarii* and *nominarii*. As I see it, there is nothing on the syllabus which should cause us to estimate five years as the period of time devoted to this learning.

It is possible that teaching methods held up progress. There are many references which point to flogging as a standard method of instilling knowledge. Horace mentions *plagusus Orbilius*,<sup>1</sup> Juvenal describes his education with the phrase *manum ferulae subducere*<sup>2</sup> and Martial frequently refers to shouting schoolmasters.<sup>3</sup> Quintilian finds it necessary to argue against corporal punishment<sup>4</sup> but Ausonius<sup>5</sup> tells his grandson of the ordeals in store and Augustine remembered well his painful school days.<sup>6</sup> An excess of corporal punishment and an atmosphere of fear would hinder creative thought, but in an educational system where imitation and memory were all important it probably did not greatly impede

<sup>1</sup>Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.70.

<sup>2</sup>Juv. 1.15.

<sup>3</sup>14.80; 5, 84; 10, 62; 9.68.

<sup>4</sup>1.2.6.

<sup>5</sup>Ep. 22 (*Protrepticus liber*) 12-34.

<sup>6</sup>Conf. 1.9; *de civ. D.* 21.14.

progress.<sup>1</sup>

The *plagosus Orbilius* figure seems to be over-emphasized. A lot of this image may be due to literary convention, much in the way the conception of the teachers' money-less position persisted.<sup>2</sup> As far back as the time of Plautus we hear complaints about the lack of control and corporal punishment exercised on school children. Lydus, the *paedagogus*, says to Philoxenus, a liberal parent:

*eademne erat haec disciplina tibi, quom tu adulescens eras?*  
 . . . . . *ubi reuenissses domum,*  
*cincticulo praecinctus in sella apud magistrum adsideres:*  
*quom librum legeres, si unam peccauissses syllabam,*  
*fieret corium tam maculosum quam est nutricis pallium.*  
 . . . . .  
*at nunc, priu' quam septuennis est, si attingas eum manu,*  
*extemplo puer paedagogo tabula dirrumpit caput.*  
*quom patrem adeas postulatum, puero sic dicit pater:*  
*'noster esto, dum te poteris defensare iniuria.'*<sup>3</sup>

In the *Satyricon* we read the complaint: *Nunc pueri in scholis ludunt.* Quintilian advocates competitions and prizes to encourage pupils,<sup>4</sup> advice which is repeated

<sup>1</sup>For memory and imitation cf. Quint. 1.3.1: *Ingenii signum in parvis praecipuum memoria est . . . Proximum imitatio . . .* cf. Quint. 1.1.19 and Cic. *de Orat.* 1.18: *Quid dicam de thesauro rerum omnium, memoria?*

<sup>2</sup>*Sterilis* became a kind of stock epithet with *cathedra* Juv. 7.203; Mart. 1.76.14; Auson. *Prof. Burd.* 10. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup>*Bacch.* 421-443.

<sup>4</sup>1.1.20.

by Jerome,<sup>1</sup> and Horace tells us of cakes being handed out, as encouragement:

*... ut pueris olim dant  
crustula blandi doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima.*<sup>1</sup>

And this comes from the same pen that wrote *plagossus Orbilius*. We may well question how general a picture that of Orbilius is.

In theory at least the play-method was not unknown:

*Nam id in primis cavere oportebit, ne studia qui amare  
nondum potest, oderit et amaritudinem semel perceptam  
etiam ultra rudes annos reformidet. Lusus hic sit.*  
...<sup>3</sup>

*Non excludo autem, id quod est inventum irritandae ad  
discendum infantiae gratia eburneas etiam litterarum  
formas in lusum offerre; vel si quid aliud, quo magis  
illa aetas gaudeat, inveniri potest, quod tractare,  
intueri, nominare iucundum sit.*

The receptiveness of the young mind was known to Quintilian and presumably to other teachers also:

*Non ergo perdamus primum statim tempus, atque eo minus,  
quod initia litterarum sola memoria constant, quae non  
modo<sup>5</sup> iam est in parvis sed tum etiam tenacissima  
est.*

<sup>1</sup>Ep. 107.4.

<sup>2</sup>Sat. 1.1.25-6.

<sup>3</sup>Quint. 1.1.20.

<sup>4</sup>Quint. 1.1.26.

<sup>5</sup>1.1.19.

Teachers who realized this would not have been slow in impressing the *initia litterarum* on the *tenacissima memoria*.

So, in the syllabus, the teaching methods, the time spent in school and the attitudes to elementary education I can find no reason for five years being devoted to this learning. In upper-class education it seems very unlikely that this was so. As I shall show<sup>1</sup> the upper classes did not regard this elementary learning as a separate stage, but saw it as a part of *grammaticae* or something learned before actually attending school. Quintilian himself apologizes profusely for including advice on elementary learning, which is strange if it were important enough to consume five academic years. In fact, although Quintilian does give this detailed advice, the impression one gets from the *Institutio Oratoria* is that the child was sent to the *grammaticus* just as soon as possible with a smattering of rudimentary learning: *Primus in eo qui scribendi legendique adeptus exit facultatem, grammatici locus est.*<sup>2</sup> And in the *Dialogus* Tacitus, (or at least the speaker, Messalla), implies that little time was spent in the elements:

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<sup>1</sup>See chapter 4.

<sup>2</sup>1.4.1.

*Transeo prima discentium elementa, in quibus et ipsis parum laboratur.*<sup>1</sup> I have already mentioned that even Plato only allots three years to this learning,<sup>2</sup> and this figure was doubtless a liberal one. I do not think a child of the upper-classes would have spent so long in learning the elements, whether they were taught at home by the *paedagogus*, father, literate slave, or whether a *grammaticus* undertook to do this.<sup>3</sup>

What of the lower-classes, who, I shall argue,<sup>4</sup> were the main patrons of the *ludus litterarius*? We have seen Plautus say that a sheep could have learned ABC in five years here, which seems to imply that this was an excessive period to attend this *ludus*.<sup>5</sup> Quintilian calls this teaching *trivialis scientia*.<sup>6</sup> A further point to consider is whether poor parents could or would have paid school fees for as long as five years.

Indeed, the evidence for children spending five years at the *ludus litterarius* is far from conclusive.

<sup>1</sup>*Dial.* 30.1.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>For these alternative possibilities see pp. 83ff. and Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup>See chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup>See p. 14f.

<sup>6</sup>1.4.27.



A passage from the *Vita Persi* attributed to Suetonius reads:

*Studit Flaccus usque ad annum XII aetatis suae Volaterris, inde Romae apud grammaticum Remmum Palaemonem et apud rhetorem Verginium Flavium.*

From this three stages of education have been inferred, and, as it is well attested that seven was the regular age for children to begin their education,<sup>1</sup> it is concluded that Persius spent the years from seven until twelve at Volaterrae in primary studies. However, we are not given specific details about the education of Persius at Volaterrae and other interpretations are possible and at least just as likely. It was normal for upper-class children to attend first a *grammaticus Graecus*, then a *grammaticus Latinus*.<sup>2</sup> Persius may well have been educated in *grammaticae Graecae* at Volaterrae therefore.<sup>3</sup> Or again, Palaemon was a very famous teacher and Persius may have left one *grammaticus* to attend a better known one in the capital.

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<sup>1</sup>At least, in the case of upper-class children, cf. Quint. 1.1.15, Juv. 14.10 [J.E.B. Mayor, *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal* (London: Macmillan, 1889-90) *ad loc.* gives some 20 examples].

<sup>2</sup>Quint. 1.4.1.

<sup>3</sup>Assuming that Palaemon was a *g. Latinus*. He was among the first to publish an *Ars grammatica* in Latin.

Marrou cites a passage from Suetonius' *Vita Neronis* as an example of a child progressing to a *grammaticus* at eleven.<sup>1</sup> However, Nero's education is atypical in that he was in line for the principate and so special pains were taken over his education and, secondly, the teacher he got was Seneca, who was more than a *grammaticus*. Obviously the young prince got a very special teacher on his adoption by Claudius. There is no compelling reason to believe that he spent his time before this in elementary studies.

A reconstruction of the life of Virgil is sometimes held to show a threefold division and age limits. However, it can be seen from the three relevant passages that no such definite details are given:

*Initia aetatis Cremonae egit usque ad virilem togam, quam XV anno natali suo accepit. . . sed Vergilius a Cremona Mediolanum et inde paulo post transiit in urbem.*<sup>2</sup>

*Diversis in locis operam litteris dedit; nam et Cremonae et Mediolani et Neapoli studuit.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Hist. édu.*, p. 360; Suet. Nero 7: *Undecimo aetatis anno a Claudio adoptatus est Annaeque Senecae iam tunc senatori in disciplinam traditus.*

<sup>2</sup>*Vita Vergili*, (Suet. ?).

<sup>3</sup>Servius *Vita Vergili*.

*Ut primum se contulit Romae [sic] studuit apud  
Epidium oratorem cum Caesare Augusto.*<sup>1</sup>

Augustine's education, while admittedly showing attendance at three schools, the *ludus litterarius*, the school of the *grammaticus* and then of the *rhetor*, does not provide us with age limits for attending the *ludus litterarius*.

Quintilian does not give us a specific age for progressing from elementary to secondary studies but, as I suggested, it does not seem he intended a long time to be spent on the former and there are some indications that among the upper-classes children began *grammatice* before eleven or twelve. In a letter to Licinius Cicero tells of the urge he had to attend the school of Plotius.<sup>2</sup> The date of this was 93 or 92 B.C. when Cicero was thirteen or fourteen. Now if he were intending to study rhetoric at this age one would expect him to have begun studying *grammatice* before the age of twelve. Again Cicero talks about getting a tutor in rhetoric for his son when the boy was only eleven.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Vita Vergili* from Berne ms.

<sup>2</sup>Cic. *apud* Suet. *Rhet.* 2. On Cic.'s early education see further pp. 66f.

<sup>3</sup>*QFr* 2.4.2.

Quintilian's elder son died when he was about ten. Although this boy is likely to have had a rather special education, it is worth noting that by his tenth year he was well away from elementary learning and had several teachers (*praeceptores*)<sup>1</sup>. He had acquired the *recte loquendi scientiam* in both Greek and Latin, which implies he had attended *grammatici* for both literatures:<sup>2</sup> *et in utracunque lingua, tamquam ad eam demum natus esset, expressa proprietas omnium litterarum*. On his deathbed his mind wandered *circa scholas ac litteras*.

It seems to me unlikely that when private tutors were employed five years were wasted on rudimentary learning. When the rich attended school they usually began with the *grammaticus*. But there is no good reason to believe that for five years prior to this the child employed its time solely learning ABC.

In the case of the poorer children who attended the *ludus litterarius*, there is no evidence for their studies lasting five years. In fact, what indications we have point to a shorter period of time spent at school. There is ample evidence for children beginning

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<sup>1</sup>6. *Prol.* 10-12.

<sup>2</sup>For this as a specific duty of the *grammaticus*, cf. Appendix B.

school at seven, but there was no legal enforcement of this. If, as I shall argue,<sup>1</sup> the graduates of the *ludus litterarius* intended their acquired skill for a practical purpose, it seems likely that on leaving school they would enter their chosen profession right away. They might for example become apprentice book-copyists.<sup>2</sup> So it would seem not unlikely that children were somewhat older than seven when they began with the *ludi magister* so that they would be old enough to be employed when their studies ended.

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<sup>1</sup>See chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup>We shall see, in fact, that *librarius* (copyist, clerk) came to be the name for the *ludi litterarii magister*, presumably because so many children from *ludi litterarii* became apprentice *librarii* (see pp. 152ff.). The teaching function of *notarii* (shorthand writers) and *calculatores* (accountants) probably developed from pupils from the *ludus litterarius* becoming apprentices to these professions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXISTENCE OF EDUCATION IN EARLY ROME

Some scholars mention that the division between the so-called primary and secondary stages in Roman education is not always readily discernible, but their comments are confined to the system in Gaul of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, evidence to suggest that these grades of learning were combined and inter-related throughout the Republic and Empire. The evidence for education before the Empire is by no means plentiful and at times suspect, but in this and the following chapter I shall attempt to show fusion of these grades in the Republic.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Marrou, *Hist. éduc.* p. 548 n. 1: *Il y a même parfois confusion entre le métier d'instituteur et celui de grammairien* (Aus. Prof. 21.4-6). *Ausone lui-même nous dit avoir successive-ment exercé les trois degrés, primaire (Protrept. 67-69) secondaire (ibid., 70-72) et supérieur (ibid., 73 et seq.)*. T. J. Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1920; repr. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1958) p. 103: *For a point which is left vague in one's mind after reading the authorities for Gaul is whether a distinction was made between the elementary school and the more advanced classes of the grammarian*; M. Roger, *L'enseignement des lettres classiques d'Ausone à Alcuin* (Paris, 1905; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968) p. 12: *La distinction entre l'enseignement de ce premier maître et celui de grammairien n'est pas nettement marquée.*

My main purpose in this chapter is to show that elementary<sup>1</sup> teaching existed at Rome, probably under Etruscan influence, before the birth of Latin literature and the growth of literary studies in the late third and early second centuries B.C. under Greek influence.<sup>2</sup>

The doubtful reliability of passages referring to education before the third century B.C. makes them of little value in themselves as evidence for the existence of learning in early Rome and Italy. It will be convenient to discuss these passages and scholarly views about them at the outset, before proceeding to more convincing reasons for believing that elementary learning existed in early Rome.

Plutarch asserts that Romulus and Remus went to Gabii for their education:

καὶ γράμματα λέγονται καὶ τᾶλλα μανθάνειν οἱ παῖδες  
Ραβίους κομισθέντες ὅσα χρὴ τοὺς εὖ γεγονότας.<sup>3</sup>

One would hesitate to put any faith in a statement about

<sup>1</sup>Since there was no literature prior to the third century B.C., any literary learning will have been rudimentary and will have involved little more than the simplest reading, writing and counting.

<sup>2</sup>See Suet. *Gram.* 1-3.

<sup>3</sup>*Rom.* 6.

semi-mythical characters in the eighth century B.C. which occurs in a writer of the late first or early second century A.D. Most scholars would follow Marrou in rejecting this as evidence for early education. However, it is interesting to note that simple literary education (such as is implied by γράμματα μανθάνειν) may have been current at this early date among the Etruscans and perhaps other people of Italy,<sup>1</sup> and that early Etruscan and Roman education was probably confined to the upper-classes (ἐν γεγονότας).<sup>2</sup> But, apart from speculation on the possibility of the conditions Plutarch implies, his statement must be rejected as trustworthy evidence.

Passages from Livy form the bulk of the literary evidence for early schools and learning. In recounting the story of Verginia, he mentions schools in the forum ca. 450 B.C.: *Virgini venienti in forum -- ibi nam in tabernaculis litterarum ludi erant -- minister decemviri libidinis manum iniecit*.<sup>3</sup> Marrou firmly

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 48ff.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 51 ff.

<sup>3</sup>3.44.6; cf. D.H. *Ant. Rom.* 11.28.6: ὁ δὲ παραγενόμενος ἐπὶ τὸ διδασκαλεῖον ἐπιλαμβάνεται τῆς παρθένου καὶ φανερώς ἄγειν ἐβούλετο δι' ἀγορᾶς.



rejects this and another passage concerning a schoolmaster and children of the Falisci: *Les textes pittoresques de Tite-Live qui prétendent évoquer des écoles primaires du type classique à Rome en 445 (449), chez les Falisques peu après 400, ne peuvent bien entendu être pris en considération.*<sup>1</sup> R.M. Ogilvie, commenting on this passage, says the reference to *ludi* is anachronistic.<sup>2</sup> Both he and Marrou mention a passage from Plutarch which records that Spurius Carvilius, freedman of Spurius Carvilius Maximus, consul in 234 B.C., was the first to open a school as a commercial venture:

ὁψὲ δ' ἤρξαντο μισθοῦ διδάσκειν. [sc. οἱ ῥωμαῖοι]  
καὶ πρῶτος ἀνέφξε γραμματοδιδασκαλεῖον Σπόριος Καρβίλιος,  
'απελευθέρους καρβιλίου τοῦ πρώτου γαμέτην ἐκβαλόντος.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marrou, *Hist. éduc.*, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup>*A Commentary on Livy Books 2-5* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 480-1.

<sup>3</sup>*Quaest. Rom.* 59.

A. Gwynn is not so quick to reject Livy's statement and points to references in Plautus to school-life.<sup>1</sup> Had Spurius' school been the first, it is incredible that schools became fashionable so quickly that Plautus saw them as common features of Roman life. Plutarch's statement about Sp. Carvilius may mean that Spurius' conduct of a school was novel in that he accepted all fee-paying pupils. It is possible that schools, in the sense of a group of pupils being taught by the same master, existed earlier, but that the teachers accepted gifts, instead of money, or that they were literate slaves or relatives who taught all the children of one family as a duty.<sup>2</sup> I do not feel that Plutarch or his statement have strong enough authority to deny the existence of schools at Rome before the third century B.C. Plutarch is far removed in date and the mention of two "firsts" is perhaps in itself suspicious in view of ancient authors' love of coincidence. We shall see that elementary

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<sup>1</sup>*Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian* (Oxford University Press, 1926: repr. New York: Columbia University: Teachers College Press, n.d. ), pp. 29-30. His references to Plautus are *Bacch.* 420ff.; *Merc.* 303; *Pers.* 173. It is possible to argue that Plautus is merely following a Greek original, but Plautus seems to be referring to scenes his audience knew well.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix A.

instruction probably appeared at a very early date in Rome,<sup>1</sup> and there is nothing inherently impossible in the existence of collective education in the fifth century B.C.

In my opinion the principal reason for rejecting Livy's statement as evidence for the existence of schools is the suspicious nature of the clause referring to schools. It could easily be a fabricated explanation of why the girl was going to the forum. Again, as with Plutarch's account of the education of Romulus and Remus, I would hesitate to deny the possible existence of schools *ca.* 450 B.C. but would reject Livy's statement as definite evidence.

In his account of the siege of Falerii in 394 B.C., Livy tells us of how a man, who was both teacher and guardian of the children of the Falisci, offered to surrender his wards as hostages to the Romans. He comments on the educational practice of the Faliscans:

*Mos erat Faliscis eodem magistro liberorum et comite uti, simulque plures pueri, quod hodie quoque in Graecia manet, unius curae demandabantur. Principum liberos, sicut fere<sup>2</sup> fit, qui scientia videbatur praecellere, erudiebat.*

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 49ff.

<sup>2</sup>5.27. If schools existed in other Italian cities before the third century B.C. it would strengthen the possibility of their existence at Rome, for the Romans would probably have been aware of such institutions. Caere may also already have had close constitutional links with Rome. Cf. e.g. E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 16ff.

We have seen that Marrou flatly rejects this statement.<sup>1</sup> Ogilvie admits the possibility that an educational system such as this might have existed because of the close contacts between the Faliscans and the Greeks, but prefers to view Livy's statement as anachronistic.<sup>2</sup>

Livy's account of this custom is necessary to explain how one man had control over the children of the leading citizens. It is a distinct possibility that this is an anachronistic explanation, but again this does not deny that *magistri* in the sense of school-teachers existed at this date.

Livy describes schools in Tusculum ca. 381 B.C.

[Camillus] . . . *ingressus in urbem [i.e. Tusculum] ubi patentes ianuas et tabernis apertis proposita omnia in medio vidit intentosque opifices suo quemque operi et ludos litterarum strepere discentium vocibus.*<sup>3</sup>

The mention of schools here is completely incidental and the existence of schools does not affect the development of the narrative at this stage. But again Livy's, or his source's, imagination may have described a scene of bustling activity typical to himself and his day. Without denying the possible existence of these schools in Tusculum, their existence cannot be asserted on this evidence.

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<sup>1</sup>See passage quoted p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>*Comm. on Livy*, p. 687.

<sup>3</sup>6.25.9.

To complete this survey of allusions to early education we must turn to examine possible evidence for Roman children going to Etruria for instruction in letters. Livy, in telling of how an Etruscan-speaking Roman spy, penetrated enemy territory, mentions that some sources held that it was common for Roman children at this date (310 B.C.) to be educated in Etruria:

[M. Fabius] *Caere educatus apud hospites, Etruscis inde litteris eruditus erat linguamque Etruscam probe noverat. Habeo auctores volgo tum Romanos pueros, sicut nunc Graecis, ita Etruscis litteris erudiri solitos; sed propius est vero praecipuum aliquid fuisse in eo qui se tam audaci simulatione hostibus immiscuerit. Servus ei dicitur comes unus fuisse<sup>1</sup>, nutritus una eoque haud ignarus linguae eiusdem.*

Marrou accepts this passage as evidence for Etruscan-influenced education.<sup>2</sup> But the assertion of Livy's *auctores* looks suspiciously like a fabricated explanation for the man's ability to speak Etruscan. Livy himself tends to reject their explanation and the implication of *volgo tum* is clearly wrong. In another incident some eight years later, banter coming from Etruscan troops

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<sup>1</sup>9.36. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup>*Hist. educ.*, p. 330.

has to be translated for a Roman legate by certain natives of Caere.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that neither the legate nor the members of his staff had a knowledge of Etruscan. Therefore it cannot have been common for Romans to be educated in Etruscan letters.

J. Heurgon accepts the statement of Livy's *auctores* and views *Etruscae litterae* as on a par with *grammaticae Graeca*.<sup>2</sup> He claims that by 310 B.C. Caere could have been sufficiently influenced by neighbouring Greeks to produce a secular literature, and that Caere, being the closest Etruscan metropolis to Rome, was the logical place for Roman children to go.<sup>3</sup> However, all Livy's passage need mean is that this man, M. Fabius, had a speaking knowledge of Etruscan, not that he was imbued with Etruscan literature. Indeed, as I shall show, there is no substantial evidence for the existence of secular Etruscan literature before 200 B.C.<sup>4</sup> Despite the ingenuity of Heurgon's thesis, I am inclined to agree with Livy's verdict:

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<sup>1</sup>Livy 10.4.9 (302 B.C.): *Haec. [sc. verba Etrusca] cum legato Caerites quidam interpretarentur.*

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Life of the Etruscans*, trans. J. Kirkup (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), pp. 237-41.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 51ff.

*propius est vero praecipuum aliquid fuisse in eo.*

In support of Livy's *auctores* Marrou cites a further passage from Cicero:

*Quocirca bene apud maiores nostros senatus tum, cum florebat, imperium decrevit ut de principum filiis sex singulis Etruriae populis in disciplinam traderentur, ne ars tanta propter tenuitatem hominum a religionis auctoritate abduceretur ad mercedem atque quaestum.*<sup>1</sup>

Marrou obviously takes the passage to mean that the sons of Roman *principes* were entrusted to the Etruscans for education. But the Latin may equally well mean that sons of Etruscan *principes* were to be distributed among the Etruscan people. Heurgon points to a remark of the Emperor Claudius which confirms this latter interpretation: *primoresque Etruriae sponte aut patrum Romanorum impulsu retinuisse scientiam et in familias propagasse.*<sup>2</sup> He is evidently referring to the same tradition Cicero records, and the circumstances which prompted Claudius to recall the attention of Romans to the *disciplina Etrusca* are similar to those Cicero gives for the senate's decree:

*[Claudius] Rettulit ad senatum super collegio haruspicum, ne vetustissima Italiae disciplina per desidium exolescere: saepe adversis rei publicae temporibus accitos, quorum*

<sup>1</sup>*Div. 1.92; cf. Etruria principes disciplinam doceto (Leg. 1.22).*

<sup>2</sup>*Tac. Ann. 11.15. Cf. Heurgon, Daily Life of the Etruscans, p. 231.*

*monitu<sup>1</sup> redintegratas caerimonias et in posterum rectius habitas.*

The action of the senate Cicero records was prompted by the Roman desire for a supply of *haruspices* to call from Etruria when needed, and Claudius, because of his antiquarian interests and his fascination with the Etruscans,<sup>2</sup> felt a similar concern. The passage of Cicero, then, refers to the propagation of religious instruction (the normal meaning of *disciplina Etrusca*<sup>3</sup>) ✓ among the Etruscans.

Marrou is probably correct in insisting on education under Etruscan influence at an early stage.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>He wrote 20 books on Etruscan antiquity (Suet. *Claud.* 42).

<sup>3</sup>*Cf.* e.g. Thulin, "*Etrusca disciplina*", *RE*, 6, 725ff.

<sup>4</sup>*Hist. educ.*, pp. 330; 339; 538-9 n. 3; 541 ns. 18, 19. It should be mentioned that while Marrou's interpretation of the literary evidence for Roman children being educated in Etruria is incorrect, the possibility exists that the sons of leading Romans were, during the Etruscan domination, taken to Etruria to be "Etruscanized" partly by being educated in letters. The Romans used this method to Romanize conquered areas (Plut. *Sert.* 14; Tac. *Agr.* 21). This practice, once established, may have continued when Rome was free of Etruscan rule.



The Etruscans seem to have been the first people in Italy to acquire the ability to write and one body of scholarly opinion holds that the Latins, as well as the Umbrians and Oscans, acquired their alphabet through the Etruscans.<sup>1</sup>

Rudimentary literary instruction existed in Etruria from the seventh century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The links between Etruria and Rome in the early period are well-established.<sup>3</sup>

The Etruscans ruled at Rome at one time, though the date of the Etruscan domination is disputed.<sup>4</sup> The Romans are noted for their ready adaptation of foreign

<sup>1</sup>Cf. e.g. T.W. Pirie, "Alphabet, Latin", *OCD*,

<sup>2</sup>See below.

<sup>3</sup>The essential facts have been conveniently assembled by E.Gjerstadt, "Cultural History of Early Rome: Summary of Archaeological Evidence", *A Arch*, 36 (1965), 1-41.

750-700 S. Etruria adopts hut urn burial current in Latium from 800 B.C.

700-625 Roman huts of this era found in Faliscan territory and Etruria. Roman oak-tree coffin burial found in Etruria. Etruscan influence on Roman weapons.

625-575 Evidence for increases in trade in pottery etc. with Etruria.

550-500 Etruscan and Latin inscriptions found at Rome.

<sup>4</sup>Usually dated to the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.

institutions. Notable borrowings from Etruria are stage performances<sup>1</sup> and gladiatorial shows<sup>2</sup>. There is evidence for literacy at Rome from the sixth century B.C. Literary implies teaching. It is probable that Rome adopted the teaching methods current among the Etruscans, methods which are similar to those used by the Greeks and the Romans in later times.<sup>3</sup>

We are indeed fortunate to have some knowledge of how elementary teaching was conducted among the early Etruscans. In a tomb at Marsigliana d'Albegna, the ancient Marsiliana, an ivory tablet has been found dating from the seventh century B.C. It is about 9 x 5 cm. with a raised border 1/2 cm. wide. On one strip of this border is engraved an archaic Etruscan alphabet running from right to left. The traces of wax and scratches caused by a *stylus* in the centre portion point to its use as an instrument for teaching writing and the remains of a doll found nearby suggest that it belonged to a child.<sup>4</sup> There are eight such model alphabets, one

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<sup>1</sup>Livy 7.2.

<sup>2</sup>Livy *Epit.* 16; Val. Max. 2.4.7; Serv. *Aen.* 3.67.

<sup>3</sup>*Cf.* Quint. 1.1. 24-32; Marrou, *Hist. éducat.*, pp. 210-18; 364-8.

<sup>4</sup>For date, description and discussion, A. Grenier, "L'alphabet de Marsiliana et les origines de l'écriture à Rome", *MEFR*, 41 (1924), 1-43.

accompanied by a syllabary, dating from the seventh century B.C. and Marrou points out that this teaching method along with the alphabet was probably borrowed from the Greeks.<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear how widespread this teaching was in early Etruria. There seems to have been some sacred significance attached to letters. There are instances of alphabets and syllabaries inscribed on the walls of tombs and on funeral monuments, Grenier remarks:

*Aucun peuple n'a montré autant de constance que les Etrusques ou leur clients d'Italie à inscrire des alphabets ou des parties d'alphabet, parfois même sur les parois des chambres sépulchrales ou les cippes qui les surmontaient.*<sup>2</sup>

The linking of religion and education is also indicated by a number of bronze tablets found at Este, at the mouth of the Po. They contain alphabets, syllabaries and rules for punctuation.<sup>3</sup> It is obvious they had an educational purpose, but they are dedicated amongst other

<sup>1</sup>*Hist. éduc.*, p. 339. The same methods were used in later Rome, cf. Quint. 1.1. 24-32.

<sup>2</sup>"L'alphabet de Marsiliana", 30-31.

<sup>3</sup>See M. Lejeune, "Problèmes de philologie Vénète" sec. 8, "Technique, orthographe et magie", *RPh*, 26 (1952), 199ff.

votive offerings to the goddess Reitia. On one tablet there are four rows of letters where each character is repeated sixteen times. The number sixteen had a religious significance for the Etruscans. For augury they divided the sky into sixteen regions, a division which is seen on a bronze liver found at Piacenza where tracts of the liver correspond to areas of the sky.

Moreover, the early Etruscans apparently did not use writing for secular purposes. Any known literature they possessed was of a religious nature. They had a kind of bible which was said to be a code dictated by a mythical Tages.<sup>1</sup> The books it contained are now classed as *libri haruspicini*, *libri fulgurales* and *libri rituales*.<sup>2</sup> These writings dealt with religious matters and the Etruscans probably regarded them as the Romans did the Sibylline books.

Another example of religious writing is a wrapping taken from an Egyptian mummy and now at the museum in Zagreb.<sup>3</sup> On this wrapping was a religious calendar written in Etruscan. How this came to be used as a shroud is not known and for a long time the language was not recognized as Etruscan.

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<sup>1</sup>Cic. *Div.* 2.50.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Thulin, "*Etrusca disciplina*", *RE*, 6, 725ff.

<sup>3</sup>See Heurgon, *Daily Life of the Etruscans*, pp.220-23.

Apart from funeral inscriptions which record the *cursus honorum* and the proper names of mythological heroes inscribed on vases there is nothing which approaches secular literature extant. However, there are three references which may point to secular Etruscan literature, two from Varro, the other from the Emperor Claudius.

In discussing the etymologies of the names for the three Roman tribes, the *Titenses*, *Ramnes*, and *Luceres*, Varro mentions a Volnius who wrote "Etruscan tragedies". Volnius has asserted the Etruscan origin of these names: *sed omnia haec vocabula Tusca ut Volnius qui tragoedias Tuscas scripsit dicebat*.<sup>1</sup> Volnius, however, is contradicting an opinion expressed by Ennius which Varro also records. Therefore, it seems that Volnius flourished in the second century B.C. and that his tragedies are not to be taken as evidence for secular literature before the second century B.C. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the words *tragoedias Tuscas* need mean tragedies in the Etruscan tongue. It is possible they could be tragedies on Etruscan themes in the same way that *Comoediae palliatae* were written in Latin on Greek subjects.

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<sup>1</sup>*Ling.* 5.55.

Varro also mentions *Tuscae historiae* which were written in the eighth Etruscan age, the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Claudius, in his famous speech found on a bronze tablet at Lyons, mentions as historical authorities *Tusci auctores*.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing to date these before 200 B.C., and other evidence suggests that Etruscan literature developed about the same time as Latin. Therefore the *Tusci auctores* probably belong to the second century B.C. or later.

If among the early Etruscans writing had a sacred significance one would not expect the teaching of this art to be widespread. Nor would it be surprising to find reverence for the written word<sup>3</sup> passed to the Romans. A list of the earliest writings at Rome do in fact show a solemn or religious connection: the *libri lintei*,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Censorinus, *DN* 17.6..

<sup>2</sup>*CIL* 13, 1668.

<sup>3</sup>For veneration for writing cf. Livy 1.7.8: *Evander tum ea, profugus ex Peloponneso, auctoritate magis quam imperio regebat loca, venerabilis vir miraculo litterarum, rei novae inter rudes artium hominum . . .* It is worth noting that it was the spoken word which was revered at some stage among the Latins as is seen in *fatum* > *fari*, *omen* > *os-men*, *vates* perhaps connected with Sansk. *vad*, to speak (cf. Lat. *vas*, *vadis*) and old Irish *faith*.

<sup>4</sup>The date from which these existed is not known, but they were early. Livy (4.13.7) tells us of their content: *nihil enim constat nisi in libros linteos utroque anno relatum inter magistratus praefecti nomen.* Cf. Pliny *HN* 13.11; Livy 4.7.12; 4.20.8. For their content and historical reliability cf. R.M. Ogilvie, "Livy, Licinius Macer and the *Libri Lintei*", *JRS*, 48 (1958), 40-48.

the predecessors of the *fasti*, the *XII Tabulae* (traditionally dated to 451-450 B.C.) and the *Tabulae Pontificum* (begun ca. 300 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> In early Rome literacy was probably not widespread. Livy seems to confirm this view, for he mentions the rarity of writing before the fourth century:

tum [i.e. before the 4th cent.] quod parvae et rarae per eadem tempora litterae fuere, una custodia fidelis memoria rerum gestarum, et quod, etiam si quae in commentariis pontificum aliisque publicis privatisque intèriere.<sup>2</sup>

However, there are certain indications that general literacy was growing. In the passage quoted above Livy mentions *privata monumenta*. The elder Pliny supports this statement: *postea publica monumenta plumbeis voluminibus, mox et privata linteis confici coepta*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The existence of these documents has some credibility among scholars. Other references to early writings are Pliny *HN* 13.13, where the discovery of a papyrus in the coffin of Numa is mentioned; Livy 1.20, where Numa is said to have given a code to a priest; Livy 1. 31-32, where Tullus Hostilius is said to have found sacrificial instructions in the memoirs of Numa, which Ancus Marcius later published. The so-called Servian census (Livy 1.42) implies the art of writing. Leaving aside the question of the validity of these testimonies, it should be noted that none are concerned with other than official or religious matters.

<sup>2</sup>6.1.2.

<sup>3</sup>*HN* 13.11.

If there is any truth behind the story of the publication of rules by Ancus Marcius, the implication is that people could read them. The publication of the Twelve Tables also points to some general ability to read. In a recent article E.E. Best<sup>1</sup> has examined literacy in the Roman army, basing his arguments on the use of *tesserae*, inscribed wooden or clay tablets. We need not with Pliny attribute the use of these to the Trojan War.<sup>2</sup> However, Polybius, writing about the middle of the second century B.C., in a first hand account of Roman camp procedure describes the use of these for delivering orders or watchwords.<sup>3</sup> Livy describes how Decius employed *tesserae* (345 B.C.): *Vigiliis deinde dispositis, ceteris omnibus tesserae dari iubet, ubi secundae vigiliae bucina datum signum esset, armatum silentio ad se convenirent.*<sup>4</sup> Livy also records the use of *tesserae* by Aemilius (310 B.C.)<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup>"The Literate Roman Soldier", *CJ*, 62 (1966), 122-7.

<sup>2</sup>*HN* 7.56.200.

<sup>3</sup>6.34. 7-12, 6.35.8-36.2.

<sup>4</sup>7.35.1.

<sup>5</sup>9.32.4.



Scipio (206 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> Salinator (207 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> The fact that Polybius vouches for the use of *tesserae* in the second century B.C. and that their use is integral to the manoeuvre in the first quoted reference from Livy, make it seem that the ability to read was current in the Roman army at least from the fourth century B.C.

The question of how far down the ranks this ability went is more difficult to answer. As Best points out, in Polybius' time men were chosen from the ranks of the cavalry at random, apparently, and were expected to be able to read written orders.<sup>3</sup> The same random choice was apparently applied in the selection of men to receive the watchword and it seems they could read it.<sup>4</sup> This implies some extent of literacy in the ranks. How far before Polybius' time there was any literacy among the rank and file is a matter for conjecture. But I think we may safely infer that all officers from centurions upwards were to some degree literate from the fourth century B.C.

There is in, fact, some rather scant

<sup>1</sup> 28.14.7.

<sup>2</sup> 27.46.1.

<sup>3</sup> See Best, "The Lit. Rom. Soldier", 122-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 122f.

evidence of literature, as opposed to the mere ability to read and write, developing from the early part of the third century. Cicero finds a speech of Appius Claudius, apparently one of the oldest he knew of, worthy of mention. He also mentions here some *laudationes funebres*.

*Nec vero habeo quemquam antiquiorem, cuius quidem scripta proferenda putem, nisi quem Appi Caeci oratio haec ipsa de Pyrrho et non nullae mortuorum laudationes forte delectant.*<sup>1</sup>

Literacy implies education and we have seen the methods likely to have been employed for teaching elementary writing and reading in early Rome.<sup>2</sup> Whether schools existed or education was given entirely at home cannot be decided with any certainty. We saw that literary evidence is sketchy and of little aid in forming a definite conception for schools and teaching in early Italy.<sup>3</sup> For the immediate purpose of this thesis it is enough to have shown that elementary learning had existed for quite some time at Rome before the birth of Latin literature and the growth of higher studies which accompanied it.

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<sup>1</sup>*Brut.* 61-2. The funeral eulogies seem to belong to the third century B.C. and were notable only for their mendacity.

<sup>2</sup>pp. 51-52.

<sup>3</sup>pp. 41-46. See further Appendix A on the development of schools.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### GREEK INFLUENCE ON THE SCOPE OF EDUCATION

Under the influence of Greek culture, which increased after the Pyrrhic and Punic wars, Latin literature was born in the third century B.C. Previously the subjects of study had been simple reading and writing and perhaps counting, but the interest in literature fostered the growth of more advanced literary studies covered by the term *grammatice*.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter the effect of the introduction to Rome of *grammatice* on the scope of the already existing elementary teaching will be examined. On analogy with modern educational systems it is tempting to regard the appearance of *grammatice* as forming a secondary grade in education, and equate the elementary learning with the modern primary stage. However, I shall argue that the Romans did not have a conception of two distinct steps, but that they regarded elementary and literary studies as one unit of learning, as it were. I shall examine what little is known of instruction in these areas in the republic from the third century B.C. with a view to showing that the scope of teaching was widened without the idea of stages existing. I shall also argue that evidence supporting this view is to be found in educational terminology and

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<sup>1</sup>For the meaning of *grammatice* see Appendix B in conjunction with pp. 67ff.

especially in an unsuccessful attempt in the first century B.C. to introduce terminology to distinguish between elementary and secondary or advanced literary learning.

Modern scholars believe that simple reading, writing, and counting belonged to the primary stage, while any sort of advanced literary learning belonged to the secondary stage which was taught by the *grammaticus*.<sup>1</sup> Poetry was the main concern of the *grammaticus* and its interpretation (denoted by the technical term *praelectio*) involved questions of metre, syntax, etymology, diction orthography and style.<sup>2</sup> With this supposed division of studies in mind, let us examine what little can be deduced about the scope of teaching of some teachers in republican Rome.

Suetonius, speaking of the birth of *grammatice* and the first *grammatici* at Rome, has this to say:

*Initium quoque eius [i.e. grammaticae] mediocre exstitit, siquidem antiquissimi doctorum, qui eidem et poetae et semigraeci erant -- Livium et Ennium dico, quos utraque lingua domi forisque docuisse adnotatum*

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<sup>1</sup>See Introd. pp. 1f.; Marrou, *Hist. éduc.*, p. 364; *Le programme de l'école primaire est toujours d'une ambition très limitée: on y apprend à lire et à écrire, rien de plus; tout ce qui est au-delà relève déjà du secondaire.*

<sup>2</sup>For the higher duties of the *grammaticus* and the higher meaning of *grammatice* connected therewith see Appendix B.

*est -- nihil amplius quam Graecos interpretabantur,<sup>1</sup>  
aut si quid ipsi Latine composuissent praelegebant.*

Whether they called themselves *grammatici* or not we do not know, but they were clearly involved in the sphere of literary studies which later came to be associated with *grammatici*, and in accordance with later terminology Suetonius classes them as such. He further implies that they were mostly concerned with Greek authors which is reasonable because there was not an abundance of Latin literature in their day. Most of their pupils must, therefore, have had a reading knowledge of Greek. It is true that the man-in-the-street at this time had some knowledge of Greek, if the average of ninety occurrences of Greek words *per* play of Plautus is any guide. But to study Greek literature -- which Suetonius says was the main concern of these early teachers -- some formal instruction in learning the Greek language will have been necessary. Therefore we must conclude that those who studied Greek literature first had a course in Greek ABC, and that there was now elementary education in Greek as well as Latin.

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<sup>1</sup>*Gram. 1.*

At some stage, slaves began to replace parents or relatives in education.<sup>1</sup> The defeat of the Greeks at Tarentum 272 provided Rome with an influx of slaves who were probably, for the most part, more cultured than their masters and well qualified to teach. The growing interest in Greek literature and the teaching of the Greek language will have gone hand in hand. Hitherto children had learned to read and write Latin, but there had been no literary works to study. But a teacher of the Greek language could offer his pupil literature to read and study.

Therefore, I think it is highly probable that Livius and Ennius (and other teachers of Greek literature at this stage) will have combined the duties modern opinion divides between the *ludi magister* and *grammaticus*.

If Plutarch's account of the freedman Spurius Carvilius is accurate and he was the first person to open a school as a commercial venture,<sup>2</sup> it is inconceivable that he made no use of the growing Latin literature in his teaching. As we have seen, rudimentary instruction in

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 41ff.

reading and writing had long existed at Rome and these will have formed the basis of Spurius' curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

Literary studies were not so far advanced that Spurius could have dealt solely with them but in reading lessons he will have used current Latin literature.<sup>2</sup>

E. Jullien well remarks of this period: *Avant de faire oeuvre d' auteur, un Romain était obligé de faire oeuvre de grammairien.*<sup>3</sup> For example, spelling had to be standardized and new words and formations were being introduced to the Latin language to increase the vocabulary. The teachers who used Latin literature were of necessity faced with grammatical problems also. Varro well illustrates the concern of *grammatica antiqua* with these problems. He is talking about levels in the explanations of words:

*Secundus [sc. gradus verborum explanandorum], quo grammatica descendit antiqua, quae ostendit, quemadmodum quodque pœta finxerit verbum, quod <que> confinxerit, quod <que> declinarit; hic Pacui 'rudentum sibilus', hic: 'incurcicervicum pecus'; hic: 'clamide clupeat b <r> acchium'.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Plutarch terms his school γραμματοδιδασκαλεῖον, a term which implies a place where ABC (γράμματα) was taught.

<sup>2</sup>It seems not unlikely that he also taught the elements of Greek and Greek literary studies, for like Livius and Ennius, he had little Latin literature at his disposal.

<sup>3</sup>*Les professeurs de littérature*, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup>*Ling.* 5.7.

And there is certain evidence, again from Plutarch, that Spurius was interested in linguistic problems which were later a concern of the *grammaticus*:

ὁψὲ γὰρ ἐχρήσαντο τῷ γάμμα καρβιλίου Σπουρίου προσεξευρόντος.<sup>1</sup>

It is not difficult to envisage that most teachers of the third and early second centuries were in the same position with regard to the scope of their teaching as Ennius, Livius and Sp. Carvilius. The scope of elementary learning broadened with the birth of literature. Indeed, Suetonius dates the real development of *grammaticae* (in the sense of advanced literary studies) as opposed to the *mediocre initium* from the embassy of Crates of Mallos *ca.* 168 B.C.:

*Primus igitur, quantum opinamur, studium grammaticae in urbem intulit Crates Mallotes . . .*<sup>2</sup>

Crates was the first head of the Pergamene library, and, during his recovery from a broken leg, he lectured to the Romans.<sup>3</sup> His scholarly methods were imitated,

<sup>1</sup>*Quaest. Rom.* 54. Cf. Terent. Scaurus, Keil 7, 15.16. I assume it is Sp. Carvilius, the freedman teacher, and not the consul of the same name who is meant. Appius Claudius (fl. *ca.* 300 B.C.) is the first person who is recorded to have added letters to the Latin alphabet, namely R, (Pompon. *Dig.* 1.2.2.36) and Z, (Mart. Cap. 3.261). For the use of various alphabetic symbols and orthography as concerns of the *grammaticus*, Quint. 1.7.

<sup>2</sup>*Gram.* 2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*



and advanced literary studies progressed at Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Not all the people Suetonius mentions in connection with the growth of *grammaticae* in the second century B.C. were teachers. Many seem to have been scholars as opposed to teachers. They devoted themselves to literary studies, but confined themselves to discussions and readings for adult audiences.<sup>2</sup> However, Suetonius mentions two slave *grammatici* who were valued highly and who taught for the profit of their masters:

*pretia vero grammaticorum tanta mercedesque tam magnae, ut constet Lutatium Daphnidem . . . DCC milibus nummum emptum ac brevi manumissum, L. Apuleium ab Elficio Calvino equite Romano praedivite quadringenis annuis conductum multos edoceret.*

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* 1. The scholars mentioned in this section seem to have fulfilled the role of publishers rather than teachers. The two Roman knights mentioned in the next chapter were certainly not teachers, for the teaching profession was carried on by freedmen and slaves. Suetonius talks of their contribution to *grammaticae*, but never calls any of the above people *grammaticus*. Cf. Jullien, *Professeurs de littérature*, p. 166; Gwynn, *Roman Educ. from Cic. to Quint.*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>*Gram.* 3.

These high prices reflect a demand for advanced learning and it would have been a waste to employ highly priced slaves like these in elementary instruction. It may be assumed that their pupils had at least a knowledge of the elements.<sup>1</sup> But this need not imply that henceforth there was a general division between elementary and advanced education. These *grammatici* are mentioned because of their abnormally high value. Presumably their schools were attended only by the very well-to-do. The existence of such schools does not mean that schools, where the elements were taught along with literature, ceased to exist. Private tutors, literate slaves and client teachers who were qualified no doubt continued to teach these subjects as one block of learning.

Moreover, we do not know at what age pupils attended these famous *grammatici*, but advanced instruction was costly to judge by the prices paid for these men, and this would be wasted on young students who had no knowledge, not only of the elements, but of literary studies. It is not unlikely, therefore, that their schools were attended by adolescents who had both elementary

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 89ff. for the possibility that the *paedagogus* may have given some minor informal instruction.

and some literary education (i.e. education in *grammaticae*).

We can in no way infer that, with the growth of *grammaticae* literary learning was separated from elementary in the relationship of a secondary to a primary stage. What little is known of Cicero's early education is instructive. Poetry was the principal concern of the *grammaticus*,<sup>1</sup> and it is the study of poetry which Cicero regarded as the start of education: *At vero nos, docti scilicet a Graecia, haec [sc. opera poetarum] a pueritia et legimus et discimus, hanc eruditionem liberalem et doctrinam putamus.*<sup>2</sup> His earliest recollection of his education (although the context may allow rhetorical exaggeration) was the encouragement and teaching of the poet Archias:

*Nam quoad longissime potest mens mea respicere spatium praeteriti temporis et pueritiae memoriam recordans ultimam, inde usque repetens hunc [i.e. Archias] video mihi principem et ad suscipiendam et ad ingrediendam rationem horum studiorum. Quod si<sup>3</sup> haec vox huius hortatu praeceptisque conformata . . .*

Plutarch also records Cicero's peculiar propensity to poetry in his early years<sup>4</sup> and it seems that for Cicero,

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix B, especially Cic. *de Or.* 1.187 quoted p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>*Tusc.* 2.27.

<sup>3</sup>*Pro Arch.* 1; cf. p. 35 for indication's of ages at which Cicero studied literature and rhetoric.

<sup>4</sup>*Vita Ciceronis* 2.

and presumably for his contemporaries, the first stage of education was literary studies which were the concern of the *grammaticus*.

This widening of the scope of elementary studies corresponds in a way to the development of the meaning of *grammatice*. The Latin is a transliteration of the Greek γραμματική which originally signified nothing more than the basic knowledge of ABC.<sup>1</sup> L.

Grasberger well describes its development:

*Die mechanische Kenntniss derselben [i.e. Buchstaben] behufs des Lesens und Schreibens ist es auch, was den ursprünglichen Begriff γραμματική ausmacht. Nur gewann bei den Hellenen durch den ausserordentlichen Umstand, dass der zu diesem Zwecke verwendete Lehrstoff aus den gefeierten und auch der ganzen Nation verständlichen Dichtern genommen wurde, ihr besondere aus Homeros, der elementare Unterricht nach Überwindung der ersten Schwierigkeiten sofort ein weit höhere Bedeutung als ein gewöhnlicher Leseunterricht in unsern Volksschulen.*<sup>2</sup>

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who was a Greek and taught at Rome ca. 30-8 B.C., describes the teaching of γραμματική, which involves what should be classed as γραμματιστική, the Greek word for elementary learning.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. L & S, s.v.

<sup>2</sup>*Erziehung und Unterricht im klassischen Alterthum, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Bedürfnisse der Gegenwart, nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Würzburg: 1875), vol. 3, "Die musische oder die Elementarschule bei den Griechen und Römern", 233-9.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. L & S, s.v.

ταύτην [i.e. γραμματικὴν] γὰρ ὅταν ἐκμάθωμεν, πρῶτον μὲν τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν στοιχείων τῆς φωνῆς ἀναλαμβάνομεν, ἃ καλεῖται γράμματα. ἔπειτα τύπους τ' αὐτῶν καὶ δυνάμεις. ὅταν δὲ ταῦτα μάθωμεν, τότε τὰς συλλαβὰς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ περὶ ταύτας πάθη.<sup>1</sup>

Dionysius proceeds to include other details of learning which formed part of the higher instruction of the γραμματικός:

κρατήσαντες δὲ τούτων, τὰ δὲ τοῦ λόγου μόρια, ὀνόματα λέγω καὶ ῥήματα καὶ συνδέσμους, καὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα τούτοις, συστολάς, ἐκτάσεις, ὀξύτητας, βαρύτητας, γένη, πτώσεις, ἀριθμούς, ἑγκλίσεις, τὰ ἄλλα παραπλήσια τούτοις μυρία ὄντα.<sup>2</sup>

As Dionysius taught at Rome he may well be reflecting on what was encompassed by the Latin transliteration of the Greek term. Although *grammaticae* had a narrower meaning in Latin from the time of the Empire,<sup>3</sup> writers of the Empire record memories of its wider sense which covered not only the higher literary instruction of the *grammaticus* but also elementary learning.<sup>4</sup> The pure

<sup>1</sup> *De admir. vi dicendi in Demos.* 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. passages quoted in Appendix B.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g. August. *De ord.* .2.12.35; Isid. *Orig.* 1.3.1 (Both these passages are quoted p. 72); Diomedes (Keil 7, 46.32ff): *Grammaticae initia ab elementis surgunt, elementa figurantur in litteras, litterae in syllabas coguntur, syllabis comprehenditur dictio, dictiones coguntur in partes orationis . . .*

Latin word used to translate *grammatice* was *litteratura*, as Quintilian tells us: *et grammaticae (quam in Latinum transferentes litteraturam vocaverunt) fines suos norit.*<sup>1</sup> Quintilian is speaking of *grammatice* in its narrower meaning, but *litteratura*, like γραμματικὴ in its original sense, could simply mean writing. When Cicero calls writing the twin-sister of memory, the word he uses is *litteratura*: *Nihil sane praeter memoriam, quam est gemina litteraturae . . .*<sup>2</sup>

Tacitus also uses *litteratura* to mean writing. He is talking about the Emperor Claudius' proposed addition of certain letters to the Latin alphabet: *Ac novas litterarum formas addidit vulgavitque, comperto Graecam quoque litteraturam non simul coeptam absolutamque.*<sup>3</sup>

Seneca was conscious of the confusion the two levels of meaning of the term could cause. He makes it clear, therefore, that he is using the word in its original significance to cover simple literacy.

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<sup>1</sup>2.1.4.

<sup>2</sup>*Part. Or.* 26.

<sup>3</sup>*Ann.* 11.13.

*quemadmodum prima illa, ut antiqui vocabant, litteratura, per quam pueris elementa traduntur . . .*<sup>1</sup>

The fact that *grammaticae/litteratura* could include elementary studies does not necessarily mean that the *grammaticus* had to teach this lower branch of learning. But the wider meaning of these terms points to a possible lack of distinction between elementary and literary study and makes it probable that the modern division between primary and secondary grades was by no means rigid. In fact, there was an abortive attempt by Varro and some of his contemporaries to categorize levels in education and this we must now examine.

A passage from the *Liber de nuptiis Mercuri et Philologiae* of Martianus Capella is the principal evidence for this attempt. In Capella's allegorical work *Grammaticae* is a bridesmaid at the wedding and gives the following account of herself:

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<sup>1</sup>Ep. 88.20. Cf. Apul. *De dog. Plat.* 1.2.: *doctores habuit in prima litteratura Dionysius, at in palaestra Aristonem.* ,

Γραμματικὴν dicor in Graecia, quod γραμμὴ linea et  
 γραμματα litterae nuncupentur, mihiq[ue] sit  
 attributum litterarum formas propriis ductibus lineare.  
 Hincque mihi Romulus litteraturae nomen inscripsit,  
 quamvis infantem me litterationem voluerit nuncupare,  
 sicut apud Graecos Γραμματικὴν primitus vocitabar,  
 tunc et antistem dedit et assectores impuberes aggregavit.  
 Itaque assertor nostri nunc litteratus dicitur,  
 litterator antea vocabatur. Hoc etiam Catullus quidam,  
 non insuavis poeta, commemorat dicens, "munus dat  
 tibi Sulla litterator". Idem apud Graecos γραμματοδιδάσκαλος  
 vocitatur. Officium vero meum tunc fuerat docte  
 scribere et legere; nunc etiam illud accessit ut meum  
 sit erudite intellegere probareque.<sup>1</sup>

Capella's whole work draws on Varro's *Disciplinarum*

*libri*<sup>2</sup> and this passage can be shown to lean heavily on

Varro. The second sentence records an attempt to

introduce *litteratio* as a term for the elementary stage

of *grammaticae*. The use of this word was Varro's

suggestion and this is recorded by Augustine in a

passage similar not only in content but in wording:

. . . librariorum et calculorum professio, velut quaedam  
*grammaticae infantia*, quam Varro *litterationem* vocat.<sup>3</sup>

Isidore repeats this information:

*primordia grammaticae artis litterae communes existunt . . .*

*Quarum disciplina velut quaedam grammaticae infantia*

*est, unde et Varro eam litterationem vocat.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>3.229.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. e.g. Schanz-Hosius § 1084.

<sup>3</sup>*De Ord.* 2.12-35.

<sup>4</sup>*Orig.* 1.3.1.



In the final sentence four duties of *grammatice* are mentioned *scribere, legere, intellegere, probare*. Marius Victorius, ✓ a grammarian of the fourth century A.D., attributes this very division to Varro:

*ut Varroni placet, ars grammatica, quae a nobis litteratura dicitur, scientia est [eorum] quae a poetis historicis oratoribusque dicuntur ex parte maiore. Eius praecipua officia sunt quattuor, ut ipsi placet, scribere legere intellegere probare.*<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, in the middle of Capella's passage a remark is made that a teacher of *grammatice* is now called *litteratus*, but previously he was called *litterator*.

The attempt to institute this terminology dates back to Cornelius Nepos and, in all probability, Varro, as a passage from Suetonius tells us:

*Appellatio grammaticorum Graeca consuetudine invaluit; sed initio litterati vocabantur. Cornelius quoque Nepos libello quo distinguit litteratum ab erudito litteratos vulgo quidem appellari ait eos qui aliquid diligenter et acute scienterque possint aut dicere aut scribere, ceterum proprie sic appellandos, poetarum interpretes qui a Graecis γραμματικοὶ nominentur.*<sup>2</sup>

In this section Suetonius seems to be drawing on various sources rather than offering original material. Nepos and later Orbilius are specifically cited.<sup>3</sup> In the second sentence *quoque* shows that Nepos' opinion is

<sup>1</sup>Keil 6, 4.5ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Gram.* 4. Throughout this section I am greatly indebted to an article by E.W. Bower, "Some Technical Terms in Roman Education", *Hermes* 89 (1961), 462-477.

<sup>3</sup>*Cf.* also the unspecified *Sunt qui*.

being quoted to confirm the opening remark. Nepos apparently published a pamphlet (*libellus*) to express an opinion on the meaning of *litteratus* and to advocate a new use for the word (*ceterum proprie sic appellandos poetarum interpretes qui a Graecis γραμματικοί nominentur*). In other words, Nepos was attempting to establish Latin terminology for education. Varro was a contemporary of Cornelius Nepos and was also concerned with educational terminology. Nepos and Varro may well have discussed terminology and held the same views.<sup>1</sup> We may assume that, when we find, in Capella's passage, statements clearly drawn from Varro at the start and finish and between them suggested terminology which Suetonius connects with Nepos, Varro at least mentioned Nepos' opinions and possibly shared his views, and that Capella drew the assertions in the middle of his passage from Varro.

Capella's record of the attempted introduction of *litteratus* for *litterator* is important since it implies that this attempt has been successful and that *litteratus* is the regular word for *grammaticus*: *Itaque assertor*

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<sup>1</sup>There was a move to purify the Latin language in the first century B.C. (cf. L.R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 118ff.) and discussion on translation of Greek terms is not unknown (Cf. Cic. *Att.* 13.31.3).

*nostri nunc litteratus dicitur litterator antea vocabatur.*

Suetonius implies that the usage *litteratus*=*grammaticus* was obsolete by his day: *Appellatio grammaticorum Graeca consuetudine invaluit; sed initio litterati vocabantur.*

In fact, there is not one definite example of *litteratus*=*grammaticus* in extant Latin literature.<sup>1</sup> It appears, therefore, that this usage only existed between the time of Nepos and Suetonius, and I am inclined to agree with Bower that what Suetonius records is a proposal, (like that of *litteratio*), which never was used.<sup>2</sup> *Litterator* remained throughout the Empire as an alternative term for *grammaticus* and more rarely, elementary teacher.<sup>3</sup> Varro's suggested *litteratio* never became current and only occurs in passages which recall Varro's coinage of the term. Yet Capella puts the statement about *litteratus* and *litterator*

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Rom. Educ.", 462-9.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 468; 475-7.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 469-74. For *litterator* as elementary teacher, Apul. *Flor.* 4.20; S.H.A. *M. Ant.* 2.2; *Sev. Alex.* 3.2; Alph. Avit. *FPL*, p. 143. In all other occurrences *litterator* is used to denote a *grammaticus*.

into the mouth of Γραμματικῇ without reference to the terminology of his day. In the passage in question he must therefore be following his source, Varro, very closely indeed and the faithfulness of Capella's paraphrase makes his passage acceptable evidence for the development of education in the first and second centuries B.C.

In this light, let us now examine the passage from Capella. The first sentence deals with the etymology of γραμματικῇ. The second records the Latin translation of this, and Varro's attempt to differentiate primary education from *grammaticæ* by calling the former *litteratio*. The latter part of this sentence records the growth of *grammaticæ* in the first century B.C. The third sentence records the attempt connected with Nepos and Varro to call the *grammaticus litteratus*. It seems that *litterator* was henceforth to be used of the primary teacher. This attempt to differentiate the names of the teachers was presumably parallel to the *litteratio/litteratura* division. Originally, the sentence implies, the name for *grammaticus* was *litterator*. There is no reason to doubt this statement as there are many examples of *litterator=grammaticus* as opposed to four instances of *litterator* = primary teacher.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See above.

The fourth sentence contains an example of the use of *litterator* by Catullus. Presumably Varro cited this as an example of the confused terminology. *Litterator* could mean this man was a *grammaticus*, while the next sentence makes it clear he was a primary teacher, γραμματοδιδάσκαλος.<sup>1</sup>

The final sentence tells us that the original task of *litteratura* was to teach reading and writing, which are two of the duties laid down by Varro according to Marius Victorius: *eius praecipua officia sunt quattuor, ut ipsi [i.e. Varro] placet; scribere legere intellegere probare.*<sup>2</sup> However, the importance of Capella's words is that they show Varro viewed the latter two duties as a later development: *nunc etiam illud accessit, ut meum sit erudite intellegere probareque.*

As Varro was attempting to rectify confused terminology, it is to be expected that he gave a reason for the confusion. Capella, closely following his source, doubtless followed the pattern of ideas. Now this last sentence is a logical place for the presentation of this reason. Let us briefly reconstruct the thought pattern

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<sup>1</sup>For the meaning of this term see Marrou, *Hist. educ.*, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Keil 6, 4-5ff.

implied by Capella's paraphrase.

- (1) Etymology of *grammaticae* and Latin equivalent.
- (2) Introduction of Latin term for Greek γραμματιστική.
- (3) New name for *grammaticus* plus example of how old term *litterator* causes confusion.
- (4) Reason for this confusion.

I have mentioned above the development of *grammaticae* reflected in this last sentence in the passage from Capella, but here we have too the reason for the confusion. As I have shown, originally Roman education comprised reading and writing. With the influx of Greek culture and the birth of Latin literature the *simple* ability to read and write became *docte scribere et legere*. The increasing Greek influence led to the establishment of *grammaticae* as we have seen Suetonius testify. However, the scope of education widened while two stages did not neatly separate. It seems more probable that the *litterator*, originally the primary teacher, gave more elevated instruction,<sup>1</sup> lecturing on literature as well as teaching ABC. Of course, as I have remarked, famous teachers will probably have concerned themselves just with higher studies, but the fact that a formal (and

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Rom. Educ.", 427.

unsuccessful) attempt was made to categorize duties and clarify terminology to distinguish between primary and secondary education implies that both stages were *generally* conceived as one unit.

In the following chapter we shall see how, in the case of the upper-classes, *grammatice* (in its wider sense) and the teaching of the *grammaticus* continued through the Empire to form the first stage of education.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### UPPER-CLASS EDUCATION AND THE *GRAMMATICUS*

Evidence for Roman education is scant for the time of the Republic, as we have seen, but, while never becoming plentiful, there is an increased amount from the Empire. As one would expect, most of our sources reflect the education of the upper-classes, a point which Plutarch makes in his treatise on education, περὶ παιδων ἀγωγῆς. He realizes the poor cannot afford the best in education and his answer is that they should do their best according to their means, thus dismissing the question quite abruptly.<sup>1</sup>

However, the poor did not go uneducated although education among them was presumably not so widespread as among the rich. I suggest that there were two education systems, one for the rich and one for the poor. Since there was little state interference in education and few legal restraints it was convention rather than regulations which preserved the existence of this duality of education systems and the dividing line need never have been hard and fast. But it seems to me that what modern works term primary education, not the actual teaching of the ABC, but the stage which most

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<sup>1</sup>lle.



children are supposed to have gone through under the *ludi magister* was actually a kind of technical education which drew its pupils from the lower classes. The upper-classes were not really aware of primary education as a separate stage but considered it a triviality either given by a literate slave or as part of the instruction of the *grammaticus*. The development of *grammaticae* outlined in the previous chapter makes this readily understandable.

In this chapter, therefore, I propose to examine upper-class education under the Empire for which the logical starting-point would seem to be Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, which is the most complete source for Roman education. Quintilian was writing in the late first century A.D. at a time when it is now generally agreed the Roman education system had become stabilized in the three-tier system. Moreover, if any authority should be trusted it is Quintilian, for he had the honour of being the first state teacher at Rome appointed apparently by Vespasian.<sup>1</sup> One would expect a man in this position to be well acquainted with the educational system

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<sup>1</sup>Suet. *Vesp.* 18: *primus e fisco Latinis Graecisque rhetoribus annua centena constituit.* Jerome *Chronicle*, anno 88 states: *Quintilianus ex Hispania Calagurritanus primus Romae publicam scholam et salarium e fisco accepit et claruit.* Jerome seems to have got his date wrong in view of Suetonius' statement.

of his day and the common-sense views which pervade his work make one prone to accept his account as balanced and true.

Quintilian was a teacher of rhetoric and not unnaturally this, the most important subject in Roman education, is his main concern. His ideal is the *perfectus orator*. Luckily for us Quintilian decided to deal with education from the cradle and it is in this respect he differs from the work he drew heavily upon, the *de Oratore* of Cicero.<sup>1</sup> M.L. Clarke well remarks:

*Quintilian's originality lay largely in the fact that he was the first to interpret the art of oratory as including all that was necessary for the training of the orator from his earliest years. Others before him had ignored the preliminary stages; he first brought them within the sphere of rhetoric.*<sup>2</sup>

In the first book Quintilian outlines and expresses his views on the teaching of the elements. The details of work given here are taken as evidence for the reconstruction of Roman primary education. For example,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Cicero's profession of intent *de Or.* 1.23: *repetamque non ab incunabulis nostrae veteris puerilisque doctrinae quemdam ordinem praeceptorum, sed ea, quae quondam accepi in nostrorum hominum eloquentissimorum et omni dignitate principum disputatione esse versata.*

<sup>2</sup>*Rhetoric at Rome* (4th ed.; London: Cohen & West, 1968), p. 120.

in a visual reconstruction of Quintilian's work, A. Driskill imagines him visiting the school of the primary teacher, where he approves of the thoroughness of the teaching, the character of the training, the concrete way of teaching reading, writing and the alphabet and the lack of corporal punishment.<sup>1</sup>

While not denying that Quintilian's evidence is valid for reconstructing how ABC was taught, it should be definitely noted that Quintilian does not mention a *litterator*, a *ludi magister* or a *primus magister* in connection with these elementary steps. One might say that this teacher was too unimportant a person for Quintilian to mention, for later he describes some learning as: *litterarii paene ista sunt ludi et trivialis scientiae*<sup>2</sup>. But Quintilian proposes to go into all details, apologizing on occasion for doing so:

*Nam ceteri fere, qui artem orandi litteris tradiderunt ita sunt exorsi, quasi perfectis omni alio genere doctrinae summam in eloquentia manum imponent, sive contemnentes tamquam, quae prius discimus, studia, sive non ad suum pertinere officium opinati . . .*  
*Ego, cum existimem nihil arti oratoriae alienum, sine quo fieri non posse oratorem fatendum est, nec ad illius rei summam nisi praecedentibus initiis perveniri, ad minora illa, . . . demittere me non recusabo; nec aliter, quam si mihi tradatur educandus orator, studia eius formare ab infantia incipiam.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>TAPhA, 63 (1932), lxi.

<sup>2</sup>1.4.27.

<sup>3</sup>Pro1. 4-5.

. . . non inutiles fore libri videbantur, quos ab ipsis dicendi velut incunabulis per omnes, quae modo aliquid oratori futuro conferant, , artis ad summam eius operis perducere destinabamus.<sup>1</sup>

Quo magis impetranda erit venia, si ne minora quidem illa, verum operi, quod instituimus, necessaria praeteribo. Nam liber primus ea, quae sunt ante officium rhetoris, continebit.<sup>2</sup>

And true to these professions Quintilian does proceed to occupy himself with the details of the child's rudimentary education. . He offers advice on the choice of a nurse.<sup>3</sup> He makes some stipulations for the standard of the parents' education.<sup>4</sup> He expounds his views on the boys' companions and *paedagogus*.<sup>5</sup> How and when the child should begin study,<sup>6</sup> the teaching methods to be employed,<sup>7</sup> are questions dealt with. After a further apology for dealing with trivialities,<sup>8</sup> Quintilian gives

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>3</sup>1.1.4.

<sup>4</sup>1.1.6.

<sup>5</sup>1.1.8.

<sup>6</sup>1.1.12-15.

<sup>7</sup>1.1.20.

<sup>8</sup>1.1.21: *Parva docemus oratorem instituendum professi, sed est sua etiam studiis infantia.*

a programme for learning the alphabet and syllabaries,<sup>1</sup>  
 recommendations for the material the child should copy<sup>2</sup>  
 and an exercise to improve pronunciation.<sup>3</sup>

In view of this wealth of detail and the professions of intent to deal with trivialities it does seem strange that no teacher is mentioned in connection with this primary stage. There can be no doubt that this first section refers to education at home for the second chapter begins with the statement: *Sed nobis iam paulatim adorescere puer et exire de gremio et discere serio incipiat.* There follows a discussion of whether private or public education is to be preferred. But primary education is not involved in this question, for chapters two and three clearly refer to secondary education. The frequent use of *praeceptor* points to a teacher higher than a *primus magister* and the use of *schola* for school also points to advanced education.<sup>4</sup> The only teachers named are the *rhetor*<sup>5</sup> and the *grammaticus*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>1.1.26.

<sup>2</sup>1.1.35-36.

<sup>3</sup>1.1.37.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 1.2.1, 4, 8, 9, 16. Wilkins (*Roman Educ.*, p. 44) rightly remarks: *It would be difficult to find a passage in classical Latin, in which schola is used of the elementary school.*

<sup>5</sup>1.2.13.

<sup>6</sup>1.2.14.

The way in which the latter is mentioned clearly shows that these sections refer mainly to him. Quintilian has been explaining how in group education students can benefit as much from a teacher lecturing a class as they can from a private tutor teaching an individual. He has cited the lectures of rhetoricians as an example, then continues, *Grammaticus quoque*, showing how the same is true with his teaching. The way this is done shows that the *grammaticus* is the teacher under special consideration in these sections, as Quintilian deliberately relates his arguments and examples to this person specifically.

Furthermore, Quintilian has already made the point that a master's presence is not always essential to a pupil's studies. In this connection he remarks: *Lectio quoque non omnis nec semper praeunte vel interpretante eget . . .*<sup>1</sup> This *lectio* was a specific duty of the *grammaticus*<sup>2</sup> and this comment shows again that Quintilian has the teaching of the *grammaticus* in mind in these sections.

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<sup>1</sup>1.2.12.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* Appendix B.

In chapter three we read Quintilian's views of the ideal teacher-pupil relationship. We are not told who the teacher is but the opening sentence of the next chapter makes it clear it is the *grammaticus*: *primus in eo, qui scribendi legendique adeptus erit facultatem, grammatici est locus.*<sup>1</sup> This is a formula of transition as Quintilian returns to the more concrete considerations of the actual syllabus after discussion of more general questions in chapter two and three. That is to say, in the first chapter we see the child learning to read and write. Then follows a discussion of private and public education. Next comes a section on the character and duties of the teacher. Then, in the above quotation, the teacher to whom chapters two and three refer is specified.

We may fairly ask ourselves, therefore, who gave the primary education laid down by Quintilian. Obviously he did not envisage attendance at a *ludus litterarius*, for as I have shown, Quintilian assumes primary education will be given at home and there is no discussion of public education in connection with this stage. Yet no

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<sup>1</sup>1.4.1.

mention is made of a home tutor, a private *primus magister*.

If such a person was to teach the elements, I find it impossible to believe that Quintilian would not have given advice on hiring him and ensuring that he was of good moral character. After all, the nurse, *paedagogus*, parents and companions are dealt with and a first teacher would be too important to omit.

However, Quintilian's readers will have been aware of normal contemporary practices in education and he may have omitted to mention specifically who taught the child ABC, while not omitting to mention this teacher among the people concerned with the young child. Quintilian mentions four groups of people concerned with young children, *nutrices*, *parentes*, *paedagogi*, *pueri inter quos educabitur*, and I think we may rightly assume that one of these people taught ABC. We have seen that rich parents had long since transferred the education of their children to literate slaves or external teachers. The *nutrix* was a wet-nurse who looked after the physical rearing of the child. The *pueri* were probably the young house-slaves who would frequent any large Roman household.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Jerome Ep. 14.3: *illi cum quibus adolevisti vernaculi*.



*paedagogus* is, therefore, the most likely candidate for the primary teacher.

Let us examine what Quintilian has to say about *paedagogi*:

*De paedagogis hoc amplius, ut aut sint eruditi plene, quam primam curam velim, aut se non esse eruditos sciant. Nihil est peius iis, qui paulum aliquid ultra primas litteras progressi falsam sibi scientiae persuasionem induerunt. Nam et cedere praecipienti partibus indignantur et velut iure quodam potestatis, quo fere hoc hominum genus intumescit, imperiosis atque interim saevientes stultitiam suam perdocent.*<sup>1</sup>

Quintilian desires *paedagogi* to be highly educated (though the implication is that this was rarely the case). If the household contained such a person, what more logical than that he should instruct the child? From this passage it appears they were normally competent with regard to *primas litteras* and so a *paedagogus* was normally capable of teaching a child the rudiments.

The theory that the *paedagogus* could fulfil the duties of an elementary teacher is no new one, but it has been passed over in silence or rejected in some modern works. As far back as 1897 A. Messer inferred from the above passage that, in the absence of any mention of anyone corresponding to the γραμματιστής, reading and

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<sup>1</sup>1.1.8.

writing was to be taught by the *paedagogus*.<sup>1</sup> F. H. Colson  
 comments on this passage:

*Quintilian certainly assumes that in his clientela such teaching [i.e. ABC] is done at home; for the discussion of the advantages of school and school methods only comes under consideration in connection with the next stage, and if the paedagogus is plene eruditus no doubt he would wish him to be employed as teacher of the elements.*<sup>2</sup>

Thus far I can agree with Colson but he continues:

*Whether he would wish the same in the case of the paulum aliquid ultra primas litteras progressi seems to me very doubtful, considering the view he expresses in II.3 on the advantages of a highly educated teacher in the earlier stages.*

The passage Colson mentions refers to students staying too long with the *grammaticus* before going to the *rhetor*, especially under a mediocre *grammaticus*, who does not fulfil his duties or exceeds them in a false impression of his knowledge. What Quintilian is in fact saying is that students should progress to proper tuition at all stages and he does not require absolute knowledge of the *grammaticus*.

<sup>1</sup>Quintilien als Didakter und sein Einfluss auf die didaktisch-pädagogische Theorie des Humanismus", *NJPhP*, Abt. 2, 43 (1897), 197.

<sup>2</sup>*M. Fabii Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae Liber 1* (Cambridge: University Press, 1924), p. 14. In his introduction p. xxix he states: *We may notice that Quintilian, who never mentions the name of the grammaticus or litterator, evidently takes it for granted that in his clientele this stage will be undertaken by the pedagogue or at any rate by some private teacher. I agree with his deduction about the paedagogus but if Quintilian had desired a private teacher he would have mentioned him.*

Elsewhere he says: *Ex quo mihi inter virtutes grammatici habebitur aliqua nescire.*<sup>1</sup> Quintilian is making exactly the same point in the passage under consideration. He would have the less educated *paedagogi* know their true knowledge and ability and therefore not try to teach beyond the primary stage: Colson rejects this explanation:

*It is possible no doubt to understand cedere praecipendi partibus as meaning that these pseudo-erudites, having been as a matter of course employed at the first stage, want to undertake the second, but I prefer to understand it that they use their position as exactores studiorum to interfere in the teaching.*<sup>2</sup>

However, it is in no way definite that Quintilian means the *paedagogus* when he uses the phrase *assiduus studiorum exactor*.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that in the context schoolmaster should be supplied as the understood subject to which the phrase is in apposition. Some teachers were renowned for their use of corporal punishment<sup>4</sup> and Quintilian is doubtless talking about corporal punishment inflicted by teachers in this section when he says: *postremo, quod ne opus erit quidem hac castigatione, si assiduus studiorum exactor astiterit.*<sup>5</sup> I prefer to

<sup>1</sup>1.8.21.

<sup>2</sup>*Comm. on Quint. 1.*

<sup>3</sup>1.3.14.

<sup>4</sup>E.g. Horace's *plagosus Orbilius*; cf. Domitianus Marsus *apud Suet. Gram. 9.*

<sup>5</sup>1.3.14.

take this as meaning that the teacher will have no need to use corporal punishment if he carefully supervises his pupils' work.

There are further considerations from the text of Quintilian which point to the *paedagogus* teaching. It will be noted that Quintilian fears their instilling a dose of their own folly in the above passage: *imperiosi atque interim saevientes stultitiam suam perdocent*.

Here he implies that they are teachers. Now it was the general role of the *paedagogus* to give moral instruction and guidance. But here Quintilian continues: *Nec minus error eorum nocet moribus*.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the effect of misguided *paedagogi* on the character of children is an additional consideration. So it must be assumed that *stultitiam suam perdocent* refers to academic training.

When discussing corporal punishment, he regards it as a possibility that the child may have some misconceptions due to the teaching of the *paedagogus*: *Nunc fere negligentia paedagogorum sic emendari videtur, ut pueri non facere quae recta sunt cogantur sed cur non fecerint puniantur*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>1.1.9.

<sup>2</sup>1.3.15.

This may of course refer to moral tuition,<sup>1</sup> but perhaps it is better taken as referring to scholastic teaching in view of the question immediately following: *Denique cum parvulum verberibus coegeris, quid iuveni facias, cui nec adhiberi potest hic metus et maiora discenda sunt.*<sup>2</sup>

Again Quintilian says of *grammatici*: *At fere minores ex conscientia suae infirmitatis haerere singulis et officio fungi quodam modo paedagogorum non indignantur.*<sup>3</sup> He may be referring to the duty of accompanying the child, but the words perhaps have more point if we interpret them as a slight on the standard of teaching of certain *grammatici*. At least the passage shows that there could be a combination of primary and moral tuition.

The theory that the *paedagogus* was the primary teacher in the case of the rich has recently been reasserted by R. Boulogne who states: *De taak van de paedagogus bestond uit drie gedeelten: bescherming en bewaking, onderwijs, opvoeding.*<sup>4</sup> His thesis has been rather unfavourably reviewed by Marrou<sup>5</sup> who says Boulogne

<sup>1</sup>cf. 1.3.12-13.

<sup>2</sup>1.3.15.

<sup>3</sup>1.2.10.

<sup>4</sup>*De plaats van de paedagogus in de romeinse cultuur*, (Groningen: Djarkarta, 1951), p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>*Gnomon*, 23 (1951), 460.

leaves a lot to do in organizing the evidence for the evolution from *paedagogus* as guardian to *paedagogus* as teacher and Bonner<sup>1</sup> in his review says that the scope of the teaching activities of the *paedagogus* seems to have been exaggerated by Boulogne. Bonner claims that Varro's *dictum*: *educit obstetrix, educat nutrix, instituit paedagogus, docet magister*, clearly shows the *paedagogus* did not teach.

However, Boulogne indicates that often a distinction was made between the *paedagogus* as moral guardian and academic teachers. But he does adduce good evidence to show the *paedagogus* as teacher as well as moral guardian <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>CR, 3 (1953), 58. For a favorable review see A. Ernout RPh, 27 (1953), 103.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63. Two places which well show the combination of custodial and academic duties in higher education are CIL 6,9449: *Pudens M. Lepidi l., grammaticus. Procurator eram Lepidae moresque regebam* and Pliny Ep. 3.3.3: *iam circumspiciendus rhetor Latinus . . . non praeceptor modo sed custos etiam rhetorque quaerendus est . . . Proinde faventibus dis trade eum praeceptor, a quo mores primum mox eloquentiam discat, quae male sine moribus discitur.* Cf. also Ausonius Ep. 22.66-8. where he mentions moral guidance in connection with teaching rhetoric: *idem vesticipes motu iam puberis aevi/ad mores artes bonas fandique vigorem/prodixi.* Dessau 7764 shows a man who was both *grammaticus* and *paedagogus*: *artis grammatices doctor morumque magister.*

and shows that this combination of duties may have dated to long before Quintilian's time. The interchange of the name *paedagogus* and *magister* in comedy points this way. Lydus in the *Bacchides* is called now *magister* now *paedagogus*.<sup>1</sup> On a line in Terence, *dum aetas, metus, magister prohibebat*<sup>2</sup> Donatus comments *magister: paedagogus*.

Boulogne hesitates to decide whether these references from comedy can be taken to mean that the *paedagogus* had appeared at Rome. But Greek customs were beginning to flood into Rome and education was falling under Greek influence. The Roman audience obviously knew what the word *paedagogus* meant and I have no doubt that *paedagogi* did exist at Rome towards the end of the third century B.C.<sup>3</sup> The education of children was being entrusted to literate slaves from the third century B.C. at least.<sup>4</sup> A teaching slave could also be employed as moral guardian, *paedagogus* and *magister*, and the combination of duties is perfectly understandable.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the employment of two slaves where one could suffice would have been strange.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, fn5. Called *paedagogus* *Bacch.* 138, 142, 423, 441. 444; *magister* 151, 163, 425, 432, 439, 446, 448.

<sup>2</sup>*Andria* 54; cf. *Phorm.* 72.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 42 and Gwynn's opinion there mentioned.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. passages quoted p. 94 fn.2

When Greek literature became a study for the Romans, it was necessary for Roman children to learn the Greek language. O. Navarre writes: *À Rome le pédagogue n'apparaît que vers la fin de la République, où l'étude de la langue grecque devient un des objets essentiels de l'éducation*.<sup>1</sup> But Greek literature was an essential of Roman education from the time of Livius and Ennius.<sup>2</sup> The *paedagogus* was probably often a Greek slave and therefore in a position to aid his ward with the elements of Greek. I argued that *grammatici* originally taught ABC (and will show that this practice was probably continued).<sup>3</sup> I suggested that a renowned *grammaticus* might concern himself solely with advanced studies.<sup>4</sup> In this case the provision of all elementary instruction may well have been left to the *paedagogus*, and the relegation of this duty to him could easily arise from the fact that Greek *paedagogi* originally helped Roman children to learn the rudiments of Greek. There is a piece of evidence from the Empire which may point to a *paedagogus* being a teacher of Greek. In an honorary inscription in Latin this dedication

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<sup>1</sup> "*Paedagogus*" Darem-Saglio, 4, 273.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Suet. *Gram.* 1 and comments pp. 60ff.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 60ff.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 66.



occurs: *paedagogo suo καὶ καθηγητῇ*.<sup>1</sup> The honoured person in this case is no slave, but the keeper of a temple. However, the intrusion of the Greek words is puzzling. *Καθηγητής* is used as an equivalent of the Latin *magister* or *praeceptor*, teacher.<sup>2</sup> The dedication could have run, therefore, *paedagogo suo et magistro*. It seems likely that the point of the Greek address is to honour a teacher of Greek.

The *paedagogus* need not have confined himself to the elements of Greek and the undertaking of elementary education in Latin also seems a natural progression. The process presumably started in the second century B.C.<sup>3</sup> though the best evidence for a *paedagogus* teaching comes from the Empire. In the *Satyricon* Eumolpus describes how he took care of his ward in Pergamum: *Iam ego coeperam ephebum in gymnasium deducere, ego studia eius ordinare, ego docere et praecipere*.<sup>4</sup> The boy here is called an ἑφηβος which should mean he was 17 or 18. But

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<sup>1</sup>Dessau 4999.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. L & S. s.v. *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* translates *praeceptor* or *magister* by *καθηγητής*; 3, 352.5; 381.9; 460-51; 646.

<sup>3</sup>E. Schuppe in *RE* s.v. *Paidagogos* dates this development from the first century A.D. However, the interchange of *magister* and *paedagogus* in comedy points to an earlier development.

<sup>4</sup>85.

it seems he was much younger if the bribes offered him are anything to go by.

The father of Bonosus, a commander of the the Roman fleet at Colonia Agrippinensis on the Rhine, was said to have been a *paedagogus litterarius*:

*Bonosus domo Hispaniensis fuit, origine Britannicus, Galla tamen matre, ut ipse dicebat rhetoris filius, ut ab aliis comperi paedagogi litterarii.*

*Litterarius* seems to mean that this *paedagogus* taught and the point of the passage appear to be that he was claimed to be a much higher teacher than he really was.

A sentence from Jerome shows that one person could be both teacher and moral guardian: *Sit ei magistra comes paedagoga custos non multo vino dedita.*<sup>2</sup> Sometimes we find *paedagogus* used with another noun which could be a synonym: *Hoc, mi Lucili, Epicurus praecepit: custodem nobis et paedagogum dedit.*<sup>3</sup> *Ego paedagogus et custos etiam quo non iusseris sequar.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>S.H.A. *Bonos.* 14. (Exact dates of Bonosus are unknown, but his rebellion was crushed 280 A.D.).

<sup>2</sup>Jerome *Ep.* 128 4.4.

<sup>3</sup>Sen. *Ep.* 11.6.

<sup>4</sup>Petron. *Sat.* 94.

There may not be a complete tautology in such passages. Since the *paedagogus* gave instruction, writers may have felt it necessary to specify the role they meant the *paedagogus* to be fulfilling. Hence the use of synonyms, *monitor*,<sup>1</sup> *custos*,<sup>2</sup> *comes*,<sup>3</sup> although the word was established in classical prose.<sup>4</sup>

This so-called primary stage seems never to have been regarded as a grade of education by the upper-class Romans. For them schooling began with the *grammaticus* who retained as a possible duty the teaching of the ABC. Quintilian clearly regards real schooling as beginning with the *grammaticus*. He begins chapters dealing with the choice of teacher (*grammaticus*)<sup>5</sup> with the statement: *Sed nobis iam paulatim adcrecere puer et exire de gremio et discere serio incipiat*.<sup>6</sup> He has already shown how the child should be taught ABC in his first chapter, but terms he uses throughout the second and third chapters imply that he regards the school of the *grammaticus* as the first stage. The pupil is said to begin here

<sup>1</sup>Sen. *Ep.* 94.8.

<sup>2</sup>Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.81; Mart. 11.39.2.

<sup>3</sup>Suet. *Claud.* 35.

<sup>4</sup>First appearance in prose *Ad Her.* 4.10.14.

<sup>5</sup>See pp. 85.

<sup>6</sup>1.2.1.

a tenero.<sup>1</sup> Again Quintilian remarks: *ita incipientibus atque adhuc teneris condiscipulorum quam praeceptoris iucundior hoc ipso quod facilius imitatio est.*<sup>2</sup>

*Praeceptor* indicates something more than a teacher of the elements and the pupils at this stage are called *teneri* and *incipientes*. In the next sentence Quintilian describes them as learning *prima elementa* and slightly farther on their intellects are described by the words *adhuc rudia ingenia*.<sup>3</sup>

Quintilian, one would expect, reflects the ideas and shows the general practice of the upper-classes. But if he were the only source for the idea that education began with the *grammaticus* one might hesitate to conclude that this was so. However, the conception that schooling began with the *grammaticus* can be found in writers from the early Empire to fifth century Gaul.

Horace offers us information in passing about his education, which his father supervised:

*noluit in Flavi ludum me mittere, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 sed puerum est ausus Romam portare, docendum  
 artis quas doceat quivis eques atque senator  
 semet prognatos.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>1.2.18.

<sup>2</sup>1.2.26.

<sup>3</sup>1.2.27.

<sup>4</sup>*Sat.* 1.6.72ff.

Horace had an upper-class education. However, it appears his first teacher was Orbilius.

*non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi  
esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo  
Orbilium dictare.*<sup>1</sup>

Suetonius classes Orbilius as a *grammaticus*.<sup>2</sup>

Again Horace says:

*Romae nutriri mihi contigit, atque doceri  
iratus Graiis quantum nocuisset Achilles.*<sup>3</sup>

Homer was the author with whom pupils began *in scholis*, that is, with the *grammaticus*. Pliny says: . . . *sic in foro pueros a centumviralibus causis auspicari ut ab Homero in scholis.*<sup>4</sup> We should note, therefore, that Horace talking about his upbringing in his young years mentions what seems to have been taught by the *grammaticus* in such a way as to indicate this was his first or primary learning.

In the *Satyricon*, Agamemnon, voicing his views on education, says:

*. . . det [sc. puer] primos versibus annos  
Maeoniumque bibat felici pectore fontem.  
Mox et Socratico plenus grege mittat habenas  
liber et ingentis quatiat Demosthenis arma.  
Hinc Romana manus circum fluat et modo Graio*

<sup>1</sup>*Epist.* 2.1.69-70.

<sup>2</sup>*Gram.* 9.

<sup>3</sup>*Epist.* 2.2.41-2.

<sup>4</sup>*Ep.* 2.14.2.

*exonerata sono mutet suffusa saporem*<sup>1</sup>

Here the education of the *grammaticus Graecus* is presumably meant by the first two lines as the last two lines in turn refer to the *grammaticus Latinus*. The middle two lines may refer to rhetoric (*Demosthenis arma*) but perhaps the expressive reading of Demosthenes with the *grammaticus* is meant. However this may be, the child's *primi anni* are devoted to studies conducted by the *grammaticus* and this is viewed as the first stage of education.

Martial tells us:

*at me litterulas stulti docuere parentes:  
quid cum grammaticis rhetoribusque mihi?  
Frange leves calamos et scinde, Thalia, libellos  
si dare sutori calceus ista potest*<sup>2</sup>.

The first line can be translated: *But my parents stupidly taught me ABC (little letters)*. It does seem better, however, to take it: *My stupid parents had me taught paltry letters*. The following line then refers to the system under which Martial was educated - in *grammaticae* and rhetoric. Whichever way we translate the first line it still remains clear that education in Martial's mind was the teaching of the *grammaticus* and *rhetor*. We see this again when to a father in search of a teacher for his son Martial says:

<sup>1</sup>*Sat.* 5.

<sup>2</sup>9.73.7ff.

*Cui tradas, Lupe, filium magistro  
quaeris sollicitus diu rogasque.  
Omnes grammaticosque rhetorasque  
devites moneo<sup>1</sup>*

From both these passages it seems that Martial disregards primary education as a separate stage.

In the passage from Pliny, a comparison is made between students beginning their forensic careers and those beginning their studies. . . *sic in foro pueros a centumviralibus causis auspicari ut ab Homero in scholis.*<sup>2</sup> One should not read too deep thought into such a simile, but it seems that the teaching of the *grammaticus* is the first stage in education which springs naturally to Pliny's mind. In such a comparison we should use ABC to signify elementary education.

Pliny gives the impression that upper-class children in Comum began their education with teachers who were above primary rank. He is astonished to find that children from Comum go to school in Milan.<sup>3</sup> One father explains: *quia nullos hic praeceptores habemus.* That one reason for this lack was the expense of hiring teachers is attested by Pliny's offer to foot one third of the cost. So, although the hiring of teachers was not

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<sup>1</sup>5.56.1ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Ep.* 2.14.2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ep.* 4.13.

uncommon in municipalities (as is implied by Pliny mentioning corruption in places: *in quibus praeceptores publice conducuntur*) these people cannot have been poorly paid elementary teachers. This is borne out by Pliny's wish that *claros praeceptores* may be obtained.

We may fairly assume that education proper was thought to begin with these teachers. It is possible that the fathers or a literate slave gave the children some sort of primary instruction. Against this view, however, may be set the negligence over education<sup>1</sup> on the part of the fathers as well as what Pliny implies in the following: *Educentur hic, qui hic nascuntur statimque ab infantia natale solum amare, frequentare consuescant.*

In the *Historia Augusta* we are given information about the education of emperors and Caesars. The lives are suspect with regard to historical veracity. Many official documents in them are forgeries and some would view the whole work as political propaganda. However this may be, there is no reason to suspect details of social history. If the work falsifies political facts, there would be all the more reason for the author(s)

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<sup>1</sup>Teachers did however gain respect at Comum as is attested by the following epitaph (CIL 5,5278):  
*P. Atili . . . grammat. Latini, cui ordo Comens. ornamenta decur. decrevit, qui universam substantiam suam adrem publ. pertinere voluit.*



to have been accurate in social details. The date of composition is generally assigned to sometime in the fourth century A.D. Therefore, the evidence for education from this work can be accepted, and, if the names of teachers are invented, at least the system of education can be taken to reflect the actual system.

Evidence for a tripartite division of education has been found in the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>1</sup> In many cases, however, we can see that education was regarded as beginning with the *grammaticus*. Of Verus,<sup>2</sup> education we are told: . . . *educatus est in domo Tiberiana*.

*Audivit Scaurinum grammaticum Latinum, Scauri filium, qui grammaticus Hadriani fuit, Graecos . . .* <sup>3</sup>

Here it may be that he was taught from the beginning by *grammatici*. His education is in any case seen as starting here.

Likewise, in the case of Commodus<sup>4</sup> we read:

*Mortuo igitur fratre Commodum Marcus et suis praeceptis et magnorum atque optimorum virorum erudire conatus est. Habuit litteratorem Graecum Onesicratem, Latinum Capellam Antistium; orator ei Ateius Sanctus fuit.* <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See chapter I.

<sup>2</sup>Emperor 161-9 A.D.

<sup>3</sup>*S.H.A. Verus* 2.5.

<sup>4</sup>Emperor 180-92 A.D.

<sup>5</sup>*S.H.A. Comm.* 1.6.

There is no mention of primary education. The first stage is under the *grammaticus Graecus*.

The account of the education of Maximinus Iunior<sup>1</sup> clearly shows the point I am trying to make:

. . . *litteris et Graecis et Latinis imbutus ad primam disciplinam. Nam usus est magistro Graeco litteratore Fabillo, cuius epigrammata et exstant, maxime in imaginibus ipsius pueri. Qui versus Graecos fecit ex illis Latinis Vergilii, cum ipsum puerum describeret . . . grammatico Latino usus est Philemone, iuris perito Modestino, oratore Titiano . . . Habuit et Graecum rhetorem Eugamium sui temporis clarum*<sup>2</sup>

In the account of Commodus' education we saw *litterator* used for *grammaticus*.<sup>3</sup> Here too the *Graeco litteratore Fabillo* has his counterpart in *grammatico Latino Philemone*.<sup>4</sup> As in the case of Commodus the only other stage of education mentioned is rhetoric. The *nam*

<sup>1</sup>Caesar 238 A.D.

<sup>2</sup>*S.H.A. Maximini Duo* 27.2-5.

<sup>3</sup>See Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Rom. Educ.," 470.

<sup>4</sup>The fact that Fabillus wrote and translated verse may also point to him being a *grammaticus*, for the prime concern of this teacher was poetry. But this is not to say that any other teacher was incapable of writing verse. Again see Bower, *ibid*.

beginning the second sentence points to these *grammatici* imbuing Maximinus with Greek and Latin literature *ad primam disciplinam*. Of course Maximinus will have had to learn ABC first. Perhaps the *grammatici* taught him. However this may be, the teaching of the *grammatici* is clearly seen as the primary stage of education.

Whether in the above cases the *grammaticus* gave primary education is difficult to decide. The man was presumably a private tutor to these princes and may have been expected to look after their learning the rudiments as well as reading literature. Or again the *paedagogus* (as it seems he did in Quintilian) or some literate slave may have taught them ABC; in which case this seems to have been disregarded as a separate stage of education. However, there is some evidence for the actual functioning of schools which show children in the same school being taught ABC as well as studies assigned to the *grammaticus*.

The *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* are bilingual school manuals dating from the early third century A.D. School life is described and the following passage<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 3, 646.

shows some children at the primary, others at the secondary stage:

*inter haec iussu magistri surgunt pusilli ad subductum et syllabas<sup>1</sup> praebuit eis unus de maioribus, alii ad subdoctorem ordine reddunt, nomina scribunt,<sup>2</sup> uersus scripserunt,<sup>3</sup> et ego in prima classe dictatum excepi. deinde ut sedimus, pertranseo commentaria, linguas, artem.<sup>4</sup> clamatus ad lectionem<sup>5</sup> audio expositiones,<sup>6</sup> sensus, personas. interrogatus artificia respondi. Ad quem, dixit. Quae pars orationis?<sup>7</sup> declinaui genera nominum,<sup>8</sup> partiui uersum.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>For syllables are part of elementary learning Quint. 1.1.30.

<sup>2</sup>For copying words in primary stage (*scribere nomina*) Quint. 1.1.34.

<sup>3</sup>For copying verses at primary stage *ibid.*, 1.1.35

<sup>4</sup>This points to critical judgement (*iudicium*) of literature under the *grammaticus*.

<sup>5</sup>For *lectio* as a duty of the *grammaticus* see Appendix A.

<sup>6</sup>The explanation of *historiae* obscure words etc. by the *grammaticus*, cf. Quint. 1.8.13-21.

<sup>7</sup>Quint. 1.8.13; 1.4.17.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.4.22.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.8.13.

The school is called *schola* (*eo in scholam*, says the speaker) which points to a secondary school. However, it seems there were classes for giving primary instruction to the *pusilli*. These were held by an older pupil or an assistant teacher (*subdoctor*).

In another passage<sup>1</sup> the speaker goes *ad scholam*.<sup>2</sup> He proceeds to read some work which is explained to him as the *grammaticus* was expected to do.<sup>3</sup> But then differences in age, ability and inclination are discussed. Classes are specifically mentioned: *reliqui autem expositionibus vacabant per duas classes, tardiores et velociores*.<sup>4</sup> Pupils are mentioned who seem to be involved in learning the elements and they were presumably in a separate class:

*alii ergo nomina, alii versus recitaverunt, quomodo soliti sunt. scribere, syllabae . . . iam perito reliqui pariter respondebant quaecunque ad incipientes praebita sunt eis, et necessaria, et numeros, digitos et calculos.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Corp. Gloss. Lat. 3, 380-4.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 380.54.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 381.58-76; cf. 382.54ff.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 382.46-53.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 382.24-43.

However, it is difficult to decide whether the *Hermeneumata* can be taken as strict evidence for Roman education. Marrou<sup>1</sup> follows Goetz in concluding that this work was for use in Greek schools, on the grounds that the Greek rendering seems more natural than the Latin. Internal professions of intent leave the question open, for the work is for those who want to speak Greek and Latin. However, evidence for Greek education is not inadmissible. Most authorities are at pains to describe the Roman debt to the Greek system and Greece and the Hellenistic east were parts of the Roman Empire. There is no necessity for the system to have been completely uniform throughout the Empire, but one would not be surprised to find universal similarities.

Worth mentioning in this connection are two school tablets found in Egypt which are definitely examples of the functioning of Hellenistic schools.<sup>2</sup> According to these primary and secondary education

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<sup>1</sup>Marrou, *Hist. édu.* p.547, n.18.

<sup>2</sup>For these see F. G. Kenyon "Two Greek School-Tablets", *JHS*, 29 (1909), 29-40.

were taught in the one school and the system has similarities with that outlined in the *Hermeneumata*.

On the primary side, one tablet has an alphabet in phonetic classification:

τὸ α	δίσσημον
τὸ β	μέσον
τὸ γ	μέσον
τὸ δ	μέσον
τὸ ε	βραχύ <sup>1</sup>

There are short *sententiae*, gnomic questions and answers. For example:

τί καίνον ἐν βίῳ καὶ παράδοξον ἄνθρωπος  
 τίς ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων διδαχὴ πείρα<sup>2</sup>

Another tablet has a pair of iambic lines below which are two ruled lines between which the pupil was to copy the verses. On another tablet is to be found a multiplication table. On the side of

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<sup>1</sup>This seems to be a way of learning the alphabet and syllabary though it may be part of *grammatice*; cf. Quint. 1.4.6f.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Corp. Gloss, Lat.* 3, 385-390; Quint. 1.1.35-6.

*grammaticae*, there is a sentence declined, the  
 κλίσις of the χρεῖα. Quintilian describes this as  
 one exercise given by the *grammaticus*<sup>1</sup> and we have  
 an example of this declension from the Latin  
 grammarian Diomedes. I translate:

*Marcus Portius Cato said that the roots of litera-  
 ture were bitter but that its fruit was sweet. Of  
 Cato it is reported that he said . . . It has seemed  
 good to Cato to say that . . . It is reported that  
 Cato said that . . . O Cato, did you not say that  
 . . .*

Then the *sententia* is put in the plural and declined  
 again: *The Marcii Portii Catones said that . . .*<sup>2</sup>

The sentence on the Greek school tablet gets the same  
 treatment, though Greek also declined in the dual.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Quint. 1.9.3; cf. Sen. Ep. 33.7.

<sup>2</sup>Keil 1, 310.

<sup>3</sup>The Greek sentence runs: ὁ Πυθαγόρας φιλόσοφος  
 ἀποβάς καὶ γράμματα διδάσκων συνεβούλευεν τοῖς  
 ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς ἐναιμόνων ἀπεχεσθαι.



Presumably there were classes in this school also<sup>1</sup>, some pupils learning the first elements, others devoting themselves to the more advanced studies of *grammaticae*. The same sort of thing probably happened in Orbilius' school<sup>2</sup> and in the schools outside Rome such as Pliny describes. Although different teachers (*subdoctores*) taught the beginners, the fact that they attended the *schola grammatici* implies that *grammaticae* in its widest sense was regarded by the Romans as the first stage in education.

We must now move to the late Empire and to Gaul for further evidence; for which Ausonius is the major source. In the *Professores*, Ausonius like Quintilian, reflects the education of the upper

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<sup>1</sup>Quintilian was aware of classes at least in higher education: [*rhetores*] *qui cum pueros in classes distribuerant, ordinem dicendi secundum vires ingenii dabant*. Cf. Rufinus, *Trans. of Origen*, In Num. 27.13 where we are told children in primary schools were classified as *abecedarii*, *syllabarii*, *nominarii* and *calculatores*.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 125ff. We shall see also that some authors even classed Orbilius' school as a primary school (*ludus litterarius*) though Suetonius calls him a *grammaticus*.

classes. This is perhaps more important to remember in the case of Ausonius because of the social and legal barrier between the upper and lower classes in the later Empire. Also, like Quintilian, Ausonius was a state professor, first a *grammaticus* then a *rhetor*, and so is a reliable authority for education.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the evidence is for the system in Gaul need not bother us. Gaul was not far from Italy in distance or culture and I have no hesitation in regarding the system here as identical to that in Italy and Rome.

In an address to the *Grammatici Graeci* of Bordeaux, Ausonius says:

*ceteri primis docuere in annis  
ne forem vocum rudis aut loquendi,  
sic sine cultu*<sup>2</sup>

*Primis in annis* would seem to point to the start of his education. Of course, the phrase could be used loosely, but again instruction by *grammatici* is the first stage of education to Ausonius' mind. In an address to Latin *grammatici*, he gives us further information about his own education:

<sup>1</sup>For his career see *Opusc.* 1.1.15ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Prof. Burd* 8.10-13.

*Sit Macrinus in his [sc. grammaticis Latinis]:  
huic mea principio  
credita puerities.* <sup>1</sup>

Here Ausonius states that Macrinus was his first teacher. However we reconcile this with the above statement about the *grammatici Graeci* (beginning with *grammatici Graeci* was Quintilian's recommendation) again the teaching of a *grammaticus* is for Ausonius the primary stage.

Whether these *grammatici* of Bordeaux taught ABC or the children were taught at home by the *paedagogus*, a literate slave or their parents is difficult to decide. We hear of an Ammonius:

*qui rudibus pueris  
prima elementa dabat,  
doctrina exiguus,  
moribus implacidis:  
proinde, ut erat meritum,  
famam habuit tenuem.* <sup>2</sup>

*Prima elementa* and *rudibus* could point to this *grammaticus*, who was not a teacher of repute, teaching ABC. However, although *prima elementa* might mean ABC, as I have noted, <sup>3</sup> Quintilian uses *prima elementa* in connection with the instruction of the *grammaticus* and

<sup>1</sup>Prof. Burd 10.10-13.

<sup>2</sup>Prof. Burd 10.36-41.

<sup>3</sup>See p.100; cf. also Quintilian's use of *rudia ingenia* (1.2.27) with *rudibus* here.

the children imagined learning these, have already had primary instruction. More definite is the following quotation:

[Crispus] *qui primaeuos fandique rudes  
elementorum prima docebas  
signa novorum.*<sup>1</sup>

It would be difficult not to interpret *prima signa novorum elementorum* as ABC and this person was a *grammaticus Graecus et Latinus* of some esteem:

*creditus olim feruere mero  
ut Vergilii Flaccique locis  
aemula ferres.*<sup>2</sup>

Ausonius gives us an account of his own duties which I will quote at length for it has been taken as evidence for three stages of education.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . . *multos lactantibus annis  
ipse alui gremioque fovens et murmura solvens  
eripui tenerum blandis nutricibus aevum.  
mox pueros molli monitu et formidine leni  
pellexi, ut mites peterent per acerba profectus,  
carpturi dulcem fructum radicis amarae.  
idem vesticipes motu iam puberis aevi  
ad mores artesque bonas fandique vigorem  
produxi, quamquam imperium cervice negarent  
ferre nec insertis praeberent ora lupatis.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Prof. Burd 21.4-6.

<sup>2</sup>Prof. Burd 10.36-9.

<sup>3</sup>E.g. Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul*, p.104; Marrou, *Hist. éduc.*, p.360, fn. 1; see p. 14, fn.1 above.

<sup>4</sup>Ep. 22 (*Protrepticus liber*) 67ff.

Ausonius took very young children, who had just left their nursemaids, into his care:

*I fostered many in their tender years, and fondling them in my bosom, drying their tears, I took them away from their coddling nursemaids while they were still very young.*

This should represent the primary stage, as, after leaving the *nutrix* the child passed under the care of the *paedagogus*, at which stage its education began.

However, the second stage implied here is rhetoric:

*Then I guided them to uprightness, noble studies and force of speech, when they had grown to manhood and assumed the toga virilis.*

It seems that in Ausonius' mind there was a two- not threefold division of education. If what he says here is the truth and not poetic exaggeration, it would seem that he taught ABC. But he was never a primary teacher. He tells us:

*nos ad grammaticen studium convertimus et mox  
rhetorices etiam, quod satis, attigimus.  
nec fora non celebrata mihi, set cura docendi  
cultior, et nomen grammatici merui<sup>1</sup>*

As a *grammaticus* he taught the first elements to young children and *multos lactantibus annis ipse alui* implies that it was common for him to teach such children. But he viewed this as a part of *grammaticae* not a separate primary stage. As in describing his

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<sup>1</sup>*Opusc.* 1.1.15-18.

own education he mentions only *grammaticae* and rhetoric, so he divides the education he tells us he gave children.

Ausonius' grandson, Paulinus, in an account of his education, shows he regarded it as beginning with the *grammaticus*:

*Nec sero exacto primi mox tempore lustrī  
dogmata Socratus et bellica plasmata Homeri  
erroresque legens cognoscere cogor Ulixis.  
Protinus et librōs etiam transire Maronis  
vix bene comperto iubeor sermone Latino,  
conloquio Graiorum adsuefactus famulorum,  
quos mihi iam longus ludorum iunxerat usus;  
unde labor puero, fateor, fuit hic mihi maior,  
eloquium librorum ignotae apprehendere linguae.<sup>1</sup>*

We see that Paulinus began his schooling when he was about five years old. But with what did he begin?

*I am forced to learn the precepts of Socrates, the martial intonations of Homer and the wanderings of Ulysses. Straightway I am made move on to Virgil, though I have scarcely a good grasp of the Latin language . . .*

At the age mentioned here Paulinus should be beginning with ABC.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the *dogmata Socratus* could be moral sentences for the child to copy but the rest of the sentence points to the reading of Homer, the

<sup>1</sup>*Eucharisticus* 72ff. Date of composition 459 A.D.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* Quint. 1.1.15ff. A *lustrum* was five years, but Paulinus need not be thinking strictly. Seven was the usual age for starting school (*cf.* Mayor, *13 Satires of Juv.*, on 14.10).

starting point of the *grammaticus Graecus*.<sup>1</sup>

Although Paulinus knew little Latin (on his own admission) he does not record learning the rudiments of Latin but states he began to read Virgil, the starting point of the *grammaticus Latinus*. Now Paulinus was eighty-three when he was writing these verses, but it is clear that he regarded the teaching of *grammatici* as the primary stage of his education.

A passage from Sidonius Apollinaris (ca. 430-479 A.D.) shows a similar conception of the stages of education.

*Iam primo tenero calentem ab ortu  
excepere sinu novem sorores  
et de te genetrice vagientem  
tinxerunt vitrei vado Hippocrenes:  
tunc, hac mersus aqua, loquacis undae  
pro fluctu mage litteras bibisti.  
hinc tu iam puer aptior magistro  
quidquid rhetoricae institutionis  
quidquid grammaticalis aut palestrae est,  
sicut iam tener hauseras, vorasti.*<sup>2</sup>

It is imagined that the child is blessed by being immersed in the spring of the Muses, which makes it more open than normal to education *aptior magistro*. However, only two stages of education are mentioned, *grammaticae* and rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup>Quint. 1.8.5; *Ideoque optime institutum est, ut ab Homero atque Vergilio lectio inciperet* . . . See also Pliny Ep. 2.14.2 quoted p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>23.206ff.

Luxorius, a poet writing in sixth century (?)<sup>1</sup>  
 Africa, addresses a mad *grammaticus* who reminds one  
 of Horace's *plagosus Orbilius*:

*Carminum interpres meritique vatum,  
 Cum leves artem pueros docere  
 Diceris vel te iuvenes magistrum  
 Audiunt verbis veluti disertum  
 Cur in horrendam furiam recedis  
 Et manu et telo raperis cruentus?  
 Non es, in quantum furor hic probatur,  
 Dignus inter grammaticos vocari  
 Sed malos inter sociari Orestas.*<sup>2</sup>

The *grammaticus* teaches *leves pueros* and older pupils  
*iuvenes*. It is not unlikely that his classes were  
 divided between elementary and more advanced literary  
 learning and that here again we have a *grammaticus*  
 who taught ABC.

From this review of evidence from the Empire  
 it seems clear that in the case of upper-class children  
 education was seen as beginning with the *grammaticus*.  
 Sometimes it seems the *grammaticus* taught ABC, some-  
 times this teaching will have been given by the

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<sup>1</sup>For the debated chronology of his life, M. Rosen-  
 blum, *Luxorius: A Latin Poet among the Vandals* (New  
 York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp.36ff:

<sup>2</sup>*Epig.* 8.



the *paedagogus* or some other person at home.

But, although Quintilian (most apologetically) gave advice on instruction prior to the teaching of the *grammaticus*, such education was not regarded by the Romans and apparently by the people of the Empire as a separate stage. For the upper-classes education had generally two stages, *grammaticae* and rhetoric. It would be wrong, therefore, to picture Roman children going through three stages in general, or worse still, going to three schools in succession, the system generally outlined in modern treatises.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PLACE OF THE *LUDUS LITTERARIUS* IN ROMAN EDUCATION

We have seen in the previous chapter that the upper-classes seem to have regarded the teaching school of the *grammaticus* as the first stage in education. If Marrou is right in holding that school was the rule for most children,<sup>1</sup> it was not the *ludus litterarius* which was the first school for upper-class Roman children. But if, as I suggest, the general modern conception of Roman children going through three stages of education or attending three schools in succession is misleading, the place of *ludi litterarii* in the Roman educational system must be properly established.

*Ludi litterarii*, which are roughly classified as primary schools according to modern terminology, were presumably the first kind of school at Rome, before the study of literature was introduced under Greek influence. As I have suggested, it seems likely that some study of literature in due course was included on the curriculum here.<sup>2</sup> In fact there is

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<sup>1</sup>*Hist. éduc.*, p. 361, where expressing a popular view, he says: *Ces exceptions reçues* [i.e. those who had private tutors] *il reste que pour le plus grand nombre des enfants, l'école est de règle.*

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 66ff.

some evidence to suggest that for some time the study of Latin literature may have fallen into the hands of the *ludi litterarii magister*.

It seems not unlikely that most of the early *grammatici* dealt mainly with Greek literature because of the lack of worthy Latin works. Suetonius clearly states that this was the case with Livius and Ennius: [*Livius et Ennius*] *nihil amplius quam Graecos interpretabantur, aut si quid ipsi Latine composuissent praelegebant*.<sup>1</sup>

Even though after them there was some Latin literature and Suetonius does record treatises and lectures on Latin authors in the second century B.C., one would expect Crates of Mallos, the true father of *grammaticae* according to Suetonius,<sup>2</sup> to have stimulated interest in Greek literature. The Greek origins of many of the early *grammatici* point this way, and Polybius comments on the crowd of teachers arriving in Rome from Greece in his time at Rome:

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<sup>1</sup>*Gram.* 1.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

πολὺ γὰρ δὴ τι φύλον ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐπίρρεον  
ὁρῶ κατὰ τὸ παρὸν τῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων.<sup>1</sup>

These teachers were presumably cashing in on the growing interest in literature and *grammatices*.<sup>2</sup>

The *ludi magistri* doubtless used any written Latin available for teaching reading and in a way they may have fulfilled the role of the *grammaticus Latinus*, for *grammatices Latinae* does not seem to have been firmly established until the time of Marcus Caecilius Epirota (ca. 25 B.C.): *Primus dicitur Latine ex tempore disputasse, primusque Vergilium et alios poetas novos praelegere coepisse*.<sup>3</sup>

There are instances of *ludi litterarii magistri* teaching old Latin authors, who were probably on their curriculum before Virgil and the *poetae novi* provided a suitable literature for *grammatices Latinae*, as the

<sup>1</sup>31.24.7.

<sup>2</sup>Jullien, (*Les professeurs de littérature*, p.171) argues that the *De Grammaticis* deals only with *grammatici Latini*, an opinion with which I cannot agree for the reasons given above.

<sup>3</sup>*Gram.* 16; cf. Marrou *Hist. éduc.*, pp.341, 373. The early *grammatici* mentioned by Suetonius who dealt with Latin literature were scholars rather than teachers and, even so, we may well doubt whether they devoted all their time to Latin literature which was in no way as abundant as Greek. Cf. p. 61.

above passage implies. We are told that Marcus Valerius Probus, who specialized in ancient authors as a scholar *grammaticus*, read these authors initially with a primary teacher, *apud grammatistam*.

*Legerat in provincia quosdam veteres libellos apud grammatistam; durante adhuc ibi antiquorum memoria, necdum omnino abolita sicut Romae.*<sup>1</sup>

As a *grammaticus* Probus flourished *ca.* 56-80 A.D. so he probably attended school in the early first century A.D., in the early years of the establishment of *grammatice Latina*, when *ludi litterarii* retained the early Latin authors on their curriculum.

Orbilius' teaching may represent another example of this. Suetonius calls Orbilius a *grammaticus*.<sup>2</sup> However, Porphyrio<sup>3</sup> and Pseudo-Acro<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Gram.* 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>3</sup> Grammarian of the early third century A.D.

<sup>4</sup> Acron was a grammarian of the second century A.D. *Scholia* alongside those of Porphyrio on Horace were first attributed to Acron by a 15th century humanist. These *scholia* are in fact a compilation from various writers, among whom is Suetonius. It is not improbable that the *scholia* contain genuine work of Acron. See Schanz-Hosius § 601.

class him as a *ludi litterarii magister*. On the lines:

*Non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi  
esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo  
Orbilium dictare*<sup>1</sup>

Pseudo-Acro comments: *Per transitum carpit Orbilium ludi magistrum. Eleganter autem ostendit vel librariis veteres libros necessarios.*<sup>2</sup> *Ludi magister* is an abbreviated form of *ludi litterarii magister*, who later was called *librarius*.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Orbilius is called now *ludi magister* now *grammaticus*, while indicating the fusion of both stages of education, is presumably due to his teaching, for he probably taught children the elements as well as higher learning, as we have seen in the case of Horace.<sup>4</sup> But the confusion

<sup>1</sup>*Ep.* 2.1.69-71.

<sup>2</sup>*Pseudacronis scholia in Horatium vetustiora* (ed. O. Keller, Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), 2, 284.

<sup>3</sup>See pp. 148ff. Martial names the teachers he knows (7.64.7): *Non rhetor, non grammaticus ludive magister*. Pseudo-Asconius (5th century A.D.) on Cic. *Div. Caec.* 47 comments: *Magister ludi: Litterarii ludi magister*. Porphyrio calls Orbilius *librarius magister* (See p. 151) and in the passage from Pseudo-Acro quoted above we find *ludi magister* = *librarius*.

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 100f.

may also be due to the fact that he specialized in literature which was left to the primary teacher. *Grammaticae Latinae* seems to have developed with interest in Virgil and the new poets, and, apart from the scholarly interest in old Latin authors noted before, they do not seem to have come under the teaching of the *grammaticus Latinus*. Probus had few pupils<sup>1</sup> and Quintilian mentions the *veteres Latini* in his list of works to be read under the *grammaticus* in such a way as to make the reader wonder if much time was spent on them.<sup>2</sup>

However this may be, the *ludus litterarius* as a place for learning to read and write existed at least from Plautus' time. The following passage shows what was taught:

De. hodie eire occepi in ludum litterarium  
Lysimache. ternas scio iam. Ly. quid ternas? De. Amo.<sup>3</sup>

We saw that with Spurius Carvilius schools became a commercial venture. The expansion of Roman territory and the growth of trade, the influx of Greeks who were to some degree educated and the growing consciousness about literature probably fostered the desire for education.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Suet. *Gram.* 24.

<sup>2</sup>1.8.8-11.

<sup>3</sup>*Merc.* 303-4.

But for the man-in-the-street a high degree of education was not necessary. The problems of *grammaticae* and the intricacies of rhetoric would have had no practical value for him. If he could read, write, and count for everyday purposes, he was educated sufficiently. The teaching of the *ludus litterarius* was tailored to these needs and I suggest that there was a division in education so that the common people generally attended the *ludus litterarius* while the upper-classes attended schools of *grammaticae* and rhetoric. The education which was thought fit for an upper-class Roman was *liberalis doctrina* which covered the *artes liberales*. Upper-class Romans would certainly never have involved themselves in a learning which was not liberal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For Roman conception of *liberales artes*, cf. Gwynn, *Roman Educ. from Cic. to Quint.*, pp. 85ff. and S. L. Mohler's comment ["Slave Education in the Roman Empire", *TAPhA*, 71 (1940), 265]: *For as applied to education, liberalis means not that which is appropriate to any free individual, but that which is appropriate for a member of the aristocracy . . .* For the conception of the liberal arts and the teachers involved in Roman law, A. Bernard, *La rémunération des professions liberales en droit Romain classique*, (Paris: Domat Montchristien, 1935).



Cicero draws the distinction between liberal and illiberal arts and learning:

*Iam de artificiis et quaestibus qui liberales habendi, qui sordidi sunt, haec fere accepimus . . . Inliberales autem et sordidi quaestus mercennariorum omnium quorum operae, non quorum artes emuntur: est enim in illis ipsa merces auctoramentum servitutis . . . opificesque omnes in sordida arte versantur: nec enim quicquam ingenuum habere potest officina . . . Quibus autem artibus prudentia maior inest aut non mediocris utilitas quaeritur, ut medicina, ut architectura, ut doctrina rerum honestarum, eae sunt iis, quorum ordini conveniunt, honestae.<sup>1</sup>*

The learning of *artes mediocris utilitatis* especially those which had a solely practical motivation behind them would be frowned upon by the nobility.

Seneca calls the acquisition of the mere ability to read and write servile (*serviles litterae*) as opposed to gentlemanly education (*liberales litterae*):

*plerisque ignaris etiam servilium<sup>2</sup> litterarum libri*

<sup>1</sup>*Off.* 1.150-51.

<sup>2</sup>Madvig, with no ms. authority, proposed *puerilium*, missing the point of *serviles*, the antithesis to *liberales*.

*non studiorum instrumenta, sed cenationum  
ornamenta sunt.*<sup>1</sup>

Slaves were given rudimentary education for practical purposes and no doubt this also led noble Romans to despise this type of education even when given to the freeborn poor. Isidore distinguishes between two sorts of letters, *communes litterae* (= Seneca's *serviles l.*) and *liberales litterae*:

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<sup>1</sup>*Tranq.* 9.5. Large households, notably the emperor's, had a *paedagogium* where young slaves were trained for certain duties. Their education probably involved the elements of literacy (*cf.* Mohler, "Slave educ. in Empire"; C. A. Forbes, "The Education and Training of Slaves in Antiquity", *TAPhA*, 86 (1955), 334-37; Marrou, *Hist. éduc.* pp. 361, 548-49 nn. 3, 4). For education of slaves in letters at an early date, *Plut. Cat. Mai.*, 21. Some slaves acquired a liberal education (*cf.* *Sen. Ben.* 3.21.2; *Pliny Epp.* 5.19.3; 9.36.4) but the majority were probably given elementary but practical training for specific jobs (*cf.* *Pliny Ep.* 9.20.2, where *notarii* and *lectores* are mentioned; *Plut. Crass.* 2, where there is a long list of specialist slaves; *Nep. Att.* 13.3, 14.1).

*Primordia grammaticae artis litterae communes existunt, quas librarii et calculatores sequuntur*<sup>1</sup>

*Litterae autem aut communes sunt aut liberales. Communes dictae, quia multi eas [sic] in commune utuntur, ut scribere et legere. Liberales quia eas tantum illi noverunt, qui libros conscribunt recteque loquendi dictandique rationem noverunt*<sup>2</sup>

From the first passage we see *librarii* (= *ludi magistri*) and *calculatores* (= teachers of arithmetic) connected with *litterae communes*. The immediate practical aim of their teaching is implied by the words in the second passage, *multi eas in commune utuntur*. The *recte loquendi dictandique rationem* of the second passage is clearly equal in meaning to the *recte loquendi scientia* of Quintilian, one of the specific duties of the *grammaticus*.<sup>3</sup> So here we see an implied division between common and liberal or lower and upper-class learning.

Of the teachers involved in the supposed three stages of Roman education, the *rhetor* and the *grammaticus* taught "liberal" subjects, the *ludi magister*

<sup>1</sup>*Orig.* 3.1.

<sup>2</sup>*Orig.* 4.2.

<sup>3</sup>*Quint.* 1.4.2.

did not. This distinction is made in the *Digest*:

*Praeses provinciae de mercedibus ius dicere solet, sed praeceptoribus tantum studiorum liberalium. Liberalia autem studia accipimus quae Graeci ἑλευθέρια appellant: rhetores continebuntur, grammatici, geometrae*<sup>1</sup>

This definition is made with regard to those teachers entitled to *ius de mercedibus*. *Ludi magistri* have claimed this right, but unjustly so because they do not teach *liberalia studia*: *Ludi quoque litterarii magistris, licet non sint professores, tamen usurpatum est, ut his quoque ius dicatur.*<sup>2</sup>

Rufinus sharply differentiates between the teaching of *liberalia studia* and the instruction of the *ludus litterarius*.<sup>3</sup> He deals in some detail with the teaching of the *ludi magister* then with the transitional formula *Similiter et in liberalibus studiis* he passes on to the teaching of the *grammaticus*.

All references to the *ludus litterarius* coming from upper-class authors are scornful. Throwing contempt on his adversary's oratory Cicero says:

<sup>1</sup>50.13.1.1. (From Ulpian).

<sup>2</sup>50.4.11.4. See also pp. 159ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Trans. of Orig. In Num. 27.13. Quoted p. 13.*

*Si ab isto libro quem tibi magister ludi nescio  
quis ex alienis orationibus compositum dedit,  
verbo uno discesseris.*<sup>1</sup> Again, casting a slight  
on a philosopher he sarcastically remarks: *sed,  
cum agellus eum non satis aleret, ut opinor, ludi  
magister fuit.*<sup>2</sup> Telling of the downfall of Dionysius  
he says: *ut Dionysius tyrannus, cum Syracusis  
expulsus esset, Corinthi dicitur ludum aperuisse.*<sup>3</sup>  
The implication is that the highest position was  
replaced by the lowest, an idea which is spelt out  
by Justinus:

*ibi Dionysius humillima quaeque tutissima existimans  
in sordissimum vitae genus descendit . . . omniaque  
ista facere ut contemnendus magis quam metuendus  
videretur. Novissime ludi magistrum professus pueros*

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<sup>1</sup>*Div. Caec. 47.*

<sup>2</sup>*Nat. D. 1.72.*

<sup>3</sup>*Fam. 9.18; cf. Tusc. 3.2.27. Lucian Somn. 23*  
*runs: εἴταν Διονύσιος καταδύσης τῆς τυραννίδος*  
*ἐν Κορίνθῳ γραμματιστῆς βλέπῃται μετὰ τηλικαύτην*  
*ἀρχὴν παιδιὰ συλλαβίζειν διδάσκων. Amm. Marc. 14.11.30*  
*reads: haec fortuna mutabilis . . . Dionysium, gentium*  
*quondam terrorem, Corinthi litterario ludo praefecit.*

*in trivio docebat, ut aut a timentibus semper in publico videretur aut a non timentibus facilius contemneretur.*<sup>1</sup>

Tacitus in a description of Junius Otho's *obscura initia* says: *Iunio Othoni litterarium ludum exercere vetus ars fuit.*<sup>2</sup>

Quintilian, as I have noted, does not envisage the class of children with whose education he is involved attending any *ludus litterarius*. His only reference to this school is a scornful one, for, in making light of very rudimentary grammar, he says: *Litterarii*

<sup>1</sup>21.5. Not only *ludi magistri* were held in low repute, but higher teachers also. Juvenal (7.198) mentions consul-rhetor relationship in such a way as to imply the highest as opposed to the lowest rung on the social ladder: *si fortuna volet, fies de rhetore consul, / si volet haec eadem, fies de consule rhetor*. Cf. Pliny Ep. 6.11.1: *nunc eo decidit ut exsul de senatore, rhetor de oratore fieret*. However, higher teachers often had high social standing e.g. Quintilian, Ausonius. Cicero, while deprecating *ludi magistri*, would raise the social position of higher teachers (Or. 142, 144, 145): *Cur igitur ius civile docere semper pulchrum fuit . . . ad dicendum si quis acuatur aut adiuvetur in eo inventutem, vituperetur? . . . at dignitatem docere non habet. certe, si quasi in ludo . . . num igitur . . . est periculum ne quis putet in magna arte et gloriosa turpe esse docere alios id quod ipsi fuerit honestissimum discere.*

<sup>2</sup>Ann. 3.66.

*paene ista sunt ludi et trivialis scientiae.*<sup>1</sup>

The elder Pliny specifies that a child on his way to a *ludus litterarius* was the son of a poor man:

*pauperis cuiusdam puerum ex Baiano Pueteolos in ludum litterarium itantem.*<sup>2</sup> And the younger Pliny

tells us that the poor were generally fond of studies: *Amat studia ut solent pauperes.*<sup>3</sup>

The poor who attended the *ludus litterarius* must have had a practical motive, their education presumably helped them further themselves. A comment of Porphyrio on Horace's education shows this aim well: *Quem [i.e. Horatium] cum pater misset in ludum litterarium paucissimis eruditus impensis angustias patris vicit ingenio.*<sup>4</sup>

The practical purpose of the education given in the *ludus litterarius* is implied by lines from Martial, who, to persuade a *ludi magister* to comply

<sup>1</sup>1.4.27.

<sup>2</sup>HN 9.25.

<sup>3</sup>Ep. 7.22.2.

<sup>4</sup>Pomponi Porphyronis Commentum in Horatium Flaccum (Emsbruck 1894: repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), p.1.10-11.

with his request, prays:

*nec calculator nec notarius velox  
maiore quisquam circulo coronetur.*<sup>1</sup>

Those who attended the *notarius*, the teacher of shorthand, were certainly intending to turn their acquired skill immediately to a practical purpose. The pupils of the *calculator* probably hoped for jobs as accountants.<sup>2</sup> These teachers are seen as rivals to the *ludi magister* and, as they gave instruction for specific trades, it may be inferred that *ludi magistri* did so too.

In the *Satyricon* the superior attitudes of the educated heroes provoke an outburst from a crony of Trimalchio:

*Non didici geometrias, critica et alogias nenias,  
sed lapidarias litteras scio, partes centum dico ad aes,*

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<sup>1</sup>10.62; cf. 9.73 where he contrasts literary education with the trade of a cobbler, and 5.56 where an upper-class education is rated below practical skills.

<sup>2</sup>For *calculator* used as accountant, *Dig.* 38.1.7.5; 27.1.15.5. In Diocletian's edict the *calculator* is granted 1-1/2 times as much as the *ludi magister*, which points to his teaching being more specialized and this implies it was directed to a specific end. It is significant, I think, that *calculatores* and primary teachers in the edict are included with other craftsmen who obviously taught apprentices a specific trade, e.g. *ceromatitae*, whose pay per pupil is the same as that of the primary teacher.



*ad pondus, ad nummum. . . iam scies patrem tuum mercedes perdidisse, quamvis et rhetoricam scis . . . nos didicimus, dicebat enim magister: sunt vestra salva? recta domum; cave, circumspicias; cave maiorem maledicas. Aut numera mapalia: nemo dupondii evadit. Ego, quod me sic vides, propter artificium meum diis gratias ago.*<sup>1</sup>

The speaker attacks the upper-class education of *grammaticae* and rhetoric. *Critica* points to the literary criticism of *grammatici*, who were sometimes called *critici* (κριτικοί). Geometry is mentioned by Quintilian as one of the studies which should go along with *grammaticae*. Rhetoric is specifically named as the antithesis to the sort of education the speaker has had. He has learned simple arithmetic and can recognize capital letters (*lapidarias litteras*). He is contrasting the common education with upper-class education and, what is important for us to note here, it is the practical aspect he underlines with the words *artificium meum* and *sunt vestra salva*.

Another incident provoked by the same kind of reason as that described above shows again the practical as opposed

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<sup>1</sup>58. This person was a slave for 40 years (*annis quadraginta servivi*). Logically he received his education as a slave, therefore. But need Petronius' thought be so strict? *Sunt vestra salva?* one would take as a question to a freeman. Anyway, whether he was a slave or not is not really important, for the education he received was the same as that given to the freeborn in the *ludus litterarius*.

to the literary education.<sup>1</sup> Trimalchio has left the room and his guests are indulging in small talk. After some quantity of unelevated conversation, Echion, the rag-dealer, turns on Agamemnon, the rhetorician:

*videris mihi, Agamemnon, dicere: quid iste argutat molestus? quia tu qui potes loquere, non loquis. non es nostrae fasciae et ideo pauperorum verba derides.*

Echion proceeds to tell Agamemnon that he is all words, *te prae litteras fatuum esse*, and implies that his practical trade is better than rhetoric because at least he can feed himself: *aliqua die te persuadeam, ut ad villam venias et videas casulas nostras? inueniemus quod manducemus, pullum, ova.* Then Echion draws a contrast between the educational inclinations of his two sons. One tends towards literary, the other practical education:

*et iam tibi discipulus crescit cicaro meus. iam quattuor partis dicit; si vixerit, habebis [sc. Agamemnon] ad latus servulum. nam quicquid illi vacat, caput de tabula non tollit.*

Echion, as a more down-to-earth businessman, sees this literary interest as a fad comparable to the child's passion for birds: *ingeniosus est et bono filo, etiam si in aves morbosus est.* Echion's attitude to the liberal arts is well shown by the

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<sup>1</sup>Sat. 46. I have not entered into dispute on points of text and interpretation, but have indicated the translation of the Latin I prefer.

ensuing comment: *invenit tamen alias nenias et libentissime pingit.* The child has made a start on Greek and Latin: *ceterum iam Graeculis calcem impingit et Latinas coepit non male appetere . . .* His teacher leaves a lot to be desired: *etiam si magister eius sibi placens sit, nec uno loco consistit.* The boy, however, is quite dedicated and comes to his father for lessons: *sed venit dem litteras, sed non vult laborare.* But his father does not recognize studies as toil: *sed non [sc. puer] vult laborare* and begins to talk about his other son who is destined for a practical education: *est et alter non quidem doctus sed curiosus . . . emi ergo nunc puero aliquot libra rubricata . . . habet haec res panem.* Echion's attitude to prolonged literary studies is well marked by his next remark:

*nam litteris satis inquinatus est. quod si resilierit destinavi eum artificii docere, aut tonstreinum aut praeconem aut certe causidicum . . .*

Echion is not opposed to some literary learning, if it only goes so far as is immediately useful. Once a person is *satis inquinatus litteris*, it is time for a trade.

Echion concludes his speech: *litterae thesaurum est, et artificium nunquam moritur.* The sense of this remark is that it pays to learn a bit and the trade this learning helps you acquire will stand to you all your life. The teaching of the *ludus litterarius* was enough in Echion's opinion, and he definitely saw an immediate practical

end in education. If a child wanted to read, Echion would not have him waste time on poetry or such literature, but would have law-books read, for there was money in that.

Finally, while dealing with the *Satyricon*, the education of Trimalchio himself should not be overlooked. He received this as a slave,<sup>1</sup> but it was presumably the same kind of education freemen received under a *calculator*. Trimalchio's education was put to a practical purpose immediately:

*erat autem venalicius cum titulis pictus, et ipse Trimalchius capillatus caduceum tenebat. Minervaeque ducente Romam intrabat hinc quemadmodum ratiocinari didicisset, deinceps dispensator factus esset . . . pictor . . . reddiderat.*<sup>2</sup>

When he was freed, this education helped him make a success in business<sup>3</sup> and many freemen will have had the same education for this purpose.

The *Satyricon* contains a lot of educational criticism and Petronius, I feel, quite deliberately draws pictures of the worst products of both literary and practical education. He paints humorous portraits of those who had learned

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<sup>1</sup>He was his master's favourite for 14 years after coming from Asia (75) and he had a fresco depicting his arrival at Rome and his education (29).

<sup>2</sup>*Sat.* 29.

<sup>3</sup>See *Sat.* 76.

merely to read and write<sup>1</sup> and of men of letters, Agamemnon, the bombastic *rhetor*, and Eumolpus, the poet cursed by the eternal urge to recite. In the literary circle at Nero's court, the effects of education on literature and the motives of education were doubtless subjects of frequent discussion. Seneca, one of Nero's ministers, complains of the impractical nature of upper-class education: *non vitae sed scholae discimus*.<sup>2</sup> In the *Satyricon* Petronius parodies many contemporary controversies and, in fact, Seneca and his ideals seem to come in for particular ridicule.<sup>3</sup> I think that Petronius, in his oblique but witty way, may well be parodying a much discussed question - the virtues of practical as opposed to literary education - and is perhaps in his subtle manner showing that no education is perfect.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Trimalchio's boastful account of his favourite's education (*Sat.* 75 ): *decem partes dicit, librum ab oculo legit . . .*

<sup>2</sup>*Ep.* 106.12.

<sup>3</sup>See J. P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pp. 193-213, for Petronius' parodies on ideas of Seneca. It seems possible that Seneca's wish for a more practical education is also parodied.

It was doubtless the practical nature of the education of the *ludus litterarius* as well as its lack of liberal depth which caused upper-class contempt for it. And there is evidence which suggests that the graduates of the *ludus litterarius* found employ in what Cicero and other upper-class Romans would term *sordida artificia*. Let us now examine the purposes to which the education given by the *ludi magister* might be put. Businessmen would find literacy and the ability to count very convenient if not absolutely necessary. Caesarius, Bishop of Arles (ca. 470-542), mentions that illiterate businessmen had to hire clerks: *negociatores, qui cum litteras non noverint, requirunt sibi mercenarios litteratos*.<sup>1</sup> But we may assume that the majority of businessmen were to some degree literate. For example, shop-keepers from Pompeii were able to write advertisements, and small-shopkeepers probably did their own accounts, stock-taking, etc. rather than hire an accountant. The teaching of the *ludi magister* which gave the ability to read, write and count would have been adequate for such people and one would expect a father, who saw his son as his heir to the business, to ensure his son was educated to this extent.

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<sup>1</sup> *Homiliae* 20.

Literacy could help an army recruit gain a position above that of *gregarius*. Vegetius<sup>1</sup> tells us:

*sed quoniam in legionibus plures scholae [= bureaucratic organizations] sunt quae litteratos milites quaerunt, ab his qui tirones probant, in omnibus quidem staturae magnitudinem corporis robur alacritatem animi convenit explorari; sed in quibusdam notarum peritia [= skill in shorthand] calculandi computandi usus eligitur.*<sup>2</sup>

Again, after describing the standard-bearers' function as a kind of company banker, he says: *Et ideo signiferi non solum fideles sed etiam litterati homines eligebantur, qui et servare deposita scirent et singulis reddere rationem.*<sup>3</sup>

Literacy could lead to the honour of enrollment in the first cohort:

*Sed prima cohors reliquas [sc. cohortes] numero militum et dignitate praecedit. Nam genere atque institutione litterarum viros electissimos quaerit.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Vegetius wrote *De re militari* probably in the late 4th cent. A.D. under Theodosius. He drew on earlier writers, however, notably Cato, Frontinus and Celsus. At all dates there was some degree of literacy among soldiers as is implied by the use of *tesserae* (pp. 43ff). However, these bureaucratic posts date in the main from after the establishment of a permanent army under the Augustan principate.

<sup>2</sup>2.19.

<sup>3</sup>2.20 *ad. fin.*

<sup>4</sup>2.6.

*Decem cohortes habere diximus legionem. Sed prima erat miliaria, in qua censu genere litteris forma virtute pollentes milites mittebantur.*<sup>1</sup>

There were many kinds of clerks (*librarii*) in the army, *librarii consulares, legatorum, numerorum, praefectorum, praepositorum, praesidium, a rationibus, tribunorum, valetudinariorum, horreorum, depositorum, caducorum*. All their duties apparently involved letters or numbers. Vegetius defines *librarii*: *librarii ab eo, quod in libros referunt rationes ad milites pertinentes.*<sup>2</sup>

The ability to read, write and count will have been sufficient for such military offices and the teaching of the *ludus litterarius* in most cases ideal. In some instances it will have been profitable to attend a specialist teacher. For *peritia notarum* presumably the would-be recruit attended the *notarius*. For soldiers involved with banking, the teaching of the *calculator* may have given some the necessary *calculandi computandi usus*. But the more general education of the *ludus litterarius* was presumably a prerequisite for this specialist teaching and in many cases the arithmetic taught here probably sufficed.

<sup>1</sup>2.12.

<sup>2</sup>2.7. The choice of literate recruits for such positions does not mean that the rest of the ranks were totally illiterate. Of the many passages that can be adduced to show general literacy in the army (See E. E. Best, "The Lit. Rom. Soldier", *CJ*, 62 (1966), 122-7), the following is especially interesting because it implies not only that *gregarii* could read, but that they could do so at a glance in the heat of battle (Veget. 2.13): *singulis centuriis singula vexilla, ita ut, ex qua cohorte vel quota est centuria, in illo vexillo litteris esset adscriptum, quod intuentes vel legentes milites in quantovis tumultu a contubernaliis suis aberrare non possent.*



Horace, speaking of his father's care for his education, says:

*Noluit in Flavi ludum me mittere magni  
quo pueri magnis e centurionibus orti  
laevo suspenso loculos tabulamque lacerto  
ibant octonos referentes Idibus aeris.  
Sed puerum est ausus Romam portare docendum  
artis, quas doceat quivis eques et senator  
semet prognatos.*<sup>1</sup>

Horace was brought to Rome so that he might have an upper-class education. We may just assume, therefore, that Flavius' school was a *ludus litterarius*, for those wanting a rudimentary education. Horace specifically states that the sons of centurions went there. The centurionate was not an office held by *equites* or senators but men from the ranks were promoted to it. Fathers who had attained this rank and who envisaged an army career for their sons would naturally ensure that their sons had whatever education was necessary to facilitate promotion from the ranks.<sup>2</sup>

Not all would-be centurions were successful: *M. Valerius Probus, Berytius, diu centuriatum petiit, donec taedio ad studia se contulit.*<sup>3</sup> He became a *grammaticus*, but what is

<sup>1</sup>*Sat.* 1.6.72-8.

<sup>2</sup>Retired centurions were sometimes men of some social standing (cf. R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939; repr. Oxford paperbacks, 1960), pp. 79-80; 243; 353). However, Horace is clearly using the word *centuriones* in a derogatory context, denoting something like "hulking clodhoppers" here and the instruction of the school of Flavius is contrasted with the liberal education given to *equites* and senators. For the *ludus litterarius* excluded from any part in the liberal arts, cf. 128ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Suet. Gram.* 24.

interesting for us is that his education prior to seeking the centurionate was that given by the *ludi magister*. He studied primarily *apud grammatistam*<sup>1</sup> as Suetonius tells us using the Greek word for *ludi litterarii magister*.

If the army offered opportunities for students from *ludi litterarii*, the civil service probably employed greater numbers. Under the Republic there will not have been so many permanent offices for scribes and clerks as under the Empire. The establishment of a bureaucracy under the Empire doubtless provided many such offices. For a clerk education in poetry and rhetoric will have been superfluous and, as with *librarii* in the army, the education given in the *ludus litterarius* will have been sufficient.

Horace had an upper-class education but he was unfortunate enough to choose the wrong side in the Civil War. After Actium he purchased a minor bureaucratic position: . . . *victisque partibus venia impetrata scriptum quaestorium comparavit*.<sup>2</sup> That this was a lowly position is attested by the derogatory comment about the father of Flavia Domitilla, Vespasian's wife: *nec quicquam amplius quam scriba quaestorio*<sup>3</sup> In fact, Horace's superior education and intellect soon led

<sup>1</sup>It is possible that his education did not stop here and he had further education not mentioned by Suetonius. But I think the implication of Suetonius is that his studies temporarily ended here.

<sup>2</sup>Suet. *Vita Horati*.

<sup>3</sup>Suet. *Vesp.* 3.

to an offer of promotion: *Augustus epistolarum quoque ei officium obtulit.*<sup>1</sup> Not all *librarii* and *scribae* will have been as well educated as Horace, and although the *scriptum quaestorium* was some sort of an honour in that it had to be purchased, most *librarii* and *scribae* will have found the education of the *ludus litterarius* sufficient. The Theodosian code provides us with information about the standard of education demanded of *librarii*. Although the edict dates from 357 A.D., the standard of education necessary for clerks will not have changed much, and in fact this edict wanted to raise it in some cases:

*In decuriarum ordine insigni, cui librariorum vel fiscalium sive censualium nomen est, nequaquam aliquis locum primi ordinis adipiscatur nisi is, quem constiterit studiorum liberalium usu atque exercitatione pollere et ita esse litteris expolitum, ut citra offensam vitii ex eodem verba procedant: quod cunctis volumus intimari. Ne autem litteraturae, quae omnium virtutum maxima est, praemia denegentur, eum qui studiis et eloquio dignus primo loco videbitur, honestiorem faciet nostra provisio sublimitate . . . tuave eius nomina indicante, ut deliberemus, quae in eum dignitas deferenda sit.*<sup>2</sup>

T. J. Haarhoff<sup>3</sup> thinks the degree of education asked for is slight, merely the ability to speak correctly. He deduces that since this is asked only of the *primus ordo*, that other *librarii* held their posts without any proficiency in elementary learning. This would imply that *librarii* were in general

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<sup>1</sup>Suet. *Vita Horati*.

<sup>2</sup>*Cod. Theod.* 14.1.1.

<sup>3</sup>*Schools of Gaul*, p.126

illiterate, an idea which is nonsensical *per se* and in view of the fact that a certain degree of literacy was demanded of soldiers fulfilling clerical duties.

The mention of *studiorum liberalium* in the edict points to upper-class education, that of the *grammaticus* and *rhetor*. Correctness of speech is a specific demand and the *recte loquendi scientia* was one of the concerns of the *grammaticus*. Rewards are to be given to *litteratura*, which, while it can mean elementary literacy, usually means the study of *grammaticae*, especially in later antiquity.<sup>1</sup> *Studiis et eloquio* also points to something more than the simple ability to read, write and count.

I interpret this edict as demanding a higher standard of education than had hitherto been normal for *librarii* of the *primus ordo*. To obtain posts of the first grade, education in *grammaticae* and perhaps rhetoric (*eloquio*) was now necessary. The first-grade posts presumably involved quite important administrative functions and, as a university degree is necessary for higher posts in the Civil Service today, a liberal education was demanded in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> But up to 357 A.D. it seems the education of the *ludus litterarius* was usually sufficient even for a post in the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Roman Educ.", 474ff.

<sup>2</sup>Just as a degree in any subject is valid for certain Civil Service posts, so this edict intended to raise the level of education although the arts learned need not have been used.

*primus ordo*, and even after the publication of this edict, for lower grades this education was still sufficient.

The book trade at Rome began to flourish from the middle of the first century B.C.<sup>1</sup> Under the early Empire there seems to have been an increased demand for books and, therefore, for copyists, *librarii*. It is true that large publishers, like Atticus, had slaves trained as copyists but we may be fairly sure that many of the urban poor who acquired the ability to read and write found employ as copyists. To copy a book is a job which neither requires great intelligence nor learning. In fact textual critics know that a poorly educated scribe is more likely to have transcribed an accurate copy than a more learned one. The teaching of the *ludus litterarius* will have provided adequate instruction for people who proposed to find a job as a copyist. Naturally children from school could not be employed as skilled copyists straightway, but would probably enter upon a kind of apprenticeship.

There is certain evidence that teaching in the *ludus litterarius* was geared to educating pupils as copyists. *Dictare* is a verb generally associated with *ludi litterarii*. Horace, impressing the need for a poet to cater for elevated

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<sup>1</sup>For the development of the book-trade, see, for example, L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 22-24.

taste, says:

. . . an tua demens  
vilibus in ludis dictari carmina velis.<sup>1</sup>

The implication is that the addressee's poetry is so naive that the man-in-the-street and hence children in school can readily understand it. Porphyrio comments on these lines: *Ludis litterariis dicit, in quibus carmina vulgata pueris adhuc rudibus dictari solent.*<sup>2</sup>

*Dictari* might mean recite here, but on the line:

*cum tibi sol tepidus pluris admoverit auris*<sup>3</sup>

Porphyrio comments:

*Secundum morem librariorum locutus est qui circum quartam vel quintam horam dictata pueris praebere consueverint, quo tempore tractabiliore sunt.*<sup>4</sup>

I have remarked that *librarii* took over the role of *ludi magistri* and from Porphyrio's passage it seems clear that dictation is being given. Pseudo-Acro's comment on the same lines further verifies this: *Tunc autem dictata accipiunt pueri cum beneficio solis cera facilius deletur.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sat. 1.10.74-5.

<sup>2</sup>Ed. Holder, p.285.

<sup>3</sup>Ep. 1.20.19.

<sup>4</sup>Ed. Holder, p.366.

<sup>5</sup>Ed. Keller, 2, 276; cf. also Pseudo-Acro's comment on Hor. Ep. 1.1.55 where Horace uses *dictata* in the sense of word of a proverb repeated *ad nauseam* (ed. Keller, 2, 211): *Dictata: Quasi dictata a parentibus data. Dictata proprie dicuntur, quae pueris a librario dictantur.*

Orbilius was a *grammaticus*, but it may have been the use of the verb *dictare* that led Porphyrio to say that he was a primary teacher, *magister librarius*. On Horace's statement: *non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi esse reor, / memini quae plagosum mihi parvo / Orbilium dictare*.<sup>1</sup> he comments: *Ex libris eius saevus, inquit, Orbilius quondam librarius magister mihi dictata praebebat*.<sup>2</sup>

It seems, therefore, that in the *ludus litterarius* well-known simple poems (or speeches?)<sup>3</sup> were chosen so that the pupils could have practice in dictation.<sup>4</sup>

There is no detailed information as to how ancient copyists worked in preparing a number of copies. It would, however, have been a lengthy process if first one *librarius* copied the original, then two *librarii* copied from the two examples and so on. With papyrus rolls such copying would have been awkward and more than two *librarii* would not have been able to copy from one example simultaneously. However, the practice of dictating to a private scribe is well-

<sup>1</sup>*Ep.* 2.1.69-71.

<sup>2</sup>*Ed.* Holder, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup>*Cf.* Cicero's remark about his speech being a household word: *meam in illum orationem pueri omnes tamquam dictata discunt* (*QFr* 3.1.4).

<sup>4</sup>Dictation was read back, *cf.* Hor. *Epist.* 1.18.12. For dictation being given and recited *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 3, 225; 646.

attested. Upper-class Romans relied on this so much that they themselves were often poor writers and Quintilian finds it necessary to insist on the merits of autography:

*Non est aliena res, quae fere ab honestis negligi solet, cura bene ac velociter scribendi. Nam cum sit in studiis praecipuum, quoque solo verus ille profectus et altis radicibus nixus paretur, scribere ipsum, tardior stilus cogitationem moratur, rudis et confusus intellectu caret; unde sequitur alter dictandi, quae transferenda sunt, labor. Quare cum semper et ubique tum praecipue in epistolis secretis et familiaribus delectabit ne hoc quidem neglectum reliquisse.*<sup>1</sup>

It seems not illogical to assume, therefore, that in publishing firms someone dictated while *librarii* took down the work in longhand. So dictation in the *ludi litterarii* may well have been a kind of training for potential copyists.<sup>2</sup>

The replacement of the *ludi magister* by the *librarius* points clearly to the fact that pupils of the *ludus litterarius*

<sup>1</sup>1.1.28. cf. too his opinion *de illis dictandi deliciis* 10.3.19.

<sup>2</sup>A controversy over the use of dictation or copying from mss. in the ancient publishing business has raged for some time. The history of the controversy and a critical examination of the opinions offered is to be found in an article by T. C. Skeat, "The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book-Production", *PBA*, 42, 179-208. He concludes that both dictation and copying from mss. were used on the basis of textual corruptions. The only literary evidence cited by Skeat or his predecessors are Pseudo-Acro's comments on Hor. *Epp.* 1.1.55; 1.20.19. Cf. also A. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) p. 271, note on *Ep.* 5.7.2.



were potential *librarii* in some sense of the word.<sup>1</sup>

*Librarii* probably developed into teachers by first having apprentices whom they taught. Then, as students from the *ludi magister* were becoming *librarii*, the *librarius* eventually began to replace the *ludi magister*. Another probable reason for the disappearance of the *ludi magister* was the position of state privileges and teachers, but let us first examine the encroachment of the *librarius*.

Diocletian's *Edict on Maximum Prices* shows a *librarius* teaching: *librario sive antiquario in singulos discipulos menstruos X quinquaginta*<sup>2</sup>. But the edict also lays down the salary for primary teachers: *Magistro instituto litterarum in singulos pueros X L*. The Edict allots salaries to *grammatici* and *rhetoires*. So presumably this teacher is a *ludi magister*. The fact that the *librarius*

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<sup>1</sup>*Librarius* covers the same range of professions as our word clerk. In passing it is worth noticing an epitaph of a *ludi magister* who drafted wills (Dessau 7763.5ff): *magister ludi litterarii Philocalus summa cum castitate in discipulos suos idemque testamenta scripsit cum fide, nec cuiquam pernegavit, laesit neminem*. This person would have been capable of training his pupils as legal clerks.

<sup>2</sup>*CIL* 3.801-41. Dated ca. 300 A.D. For *antiquarii* cf. Isid. Orig. 6.14: *librarii autem iidem et antiquarii vocantur: sed librarii sunt qui nova et vetera scribunt; antiquarii qui tantummodo vetera, unde et nomen sumpserunt*.

and the *magister* are accorded the same salary points to their teaching being on the same level. However, the pupils of the *librarius* are called *discipuli*, those of the *magister* *pueri*. So perhaps those attending the *librarius* are older boys.<sup>1</sup> In any case, the *ludi magister's* functions have not yet been completely usurped by the *librarius*.

In the *Digest* in a section dealing with teachers and their salaries, we are told that only higher teachers had rights in this respect, but lesser teachers also claimed these rights. *Ludi magistri* are again mentioned alongside *librarii*:

*Ludi quoque litterarii magistris, licet non sint professores, tamen usurpatum est, ut his quoque ius dicatur: iam et librariis et notariis et calculatoribus sive tabulariis.*<sup>2</sup>

Here again *ludi magistri* are probably pure teachers while *librarii* are professional men who train apprentices.

In a section of the *Digest* dealing with the army we find mention of: *librarii quoque qui docere possint*. The clause is slightly puzzling, for it seems to mean the class of *librarii* who are teachers as opposed to other kinds of *librarii*. At greater length the passage runs:

<sup>1</sup> *Grammatici* and rhetoricians have *discipuli*, while lesser teachers, *calculatores*, *notarii* have *pueri*. But the distinction may not be an important one for potters have *discipuli* at half the allowance architects are allotted for *pueri*.

<sup>2</sup> 50.13.1.6.

*in eodem numero haberi solent lani, venatores victimarii et optio fabricae et qui aegris praesto sunt, librarii quoque qui docere possint, et horreorum librarii et librarii depositorum, et librarii caducorum, et adiutores corniculariorum, et stratores, et polliones, et custodes armorum, et praeco, et bucinator. hi igitur omnes inter immunes habentur.*<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that the phrase means "*librarii* who are able to teach", and the following "*et's*" are explanatory, "that is, the *librarii* of the granaries etc." But this translation is most unlikely for two reasons, the awkwardness of such explanatory "*et's*" in this list where "*et*" is simply a conjunction in the other cases, and the strangeness of the information *qui docere possint*. Why would Tarruntenus Paternus have included this fact in a summary list? With this interpretation what would the clause mean? That they had the potential to teach when they left the army or on a given occasion? It seems to me that the first translation is the correct one, though I am not sure what the clause means. Perhaps these *librarii* trained other soldiers for clerical duties, for there were quite a number of clerks in the Roman Army.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it was a *librarius* of this kind who was teaching the young hostages the rudiments

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<sup>1</sup>*Dig.* 50.6.7.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. *Librarii* other than those mentioned here, *l. consularis, l. legati, l. numeris, l. praefecti, l. praepositi, l. praesidis, l. a rationibus, l. tribuni, l. valetudinarii.*

of Latin during Caligula's "campaign":

*Rursus obsides quosdam abductos e litterario ludo, clamque praemissos, deserto repente convivio cum equitatu insecutus, veluti profugos ac reprehensos in catenis reduxit; in hoc quoque mimo praeter modum intemperans.*<sup>1</sup>

In the foregoing examples the *librarius* could be specifically a teacher of transcription or a trainer of clerks. In the actual education given there will have been little difference between that of the *ludi magister* and *librarius*, though it seems possible that the latter may not have taught arithmetic.

However, the *librarius* came to be equated exactly with the *ludi litterarii magister*. Again I quote Pseudo-Acro's comment on Horace's Orbilius: *Per transitum carpit Orbilium ludi magistrum. Eleganter autem ostendit vel librario libros necessarios.*<sup>2</sup> Here *ludi magister* and *librarius* are interchangeable terms.

A passage from Porphyrio illustrates the same use of *librarius*. Horace is addressing his book and picturing a horrible fate for it:

*hoc quoque te manet, ut pueros elementa docentem/occupet  
extrema in vicis<sup>3</sup> balba senectus/cum tibi sol tepidus plures  
admoverit aures*

<sup>1</sup>Suet. *Gaius* 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ed. Keller, 2, 284.

<sup>3</sup>Hor. *Epist.* 1.20.17-19.

This fate is clearly the same as that which Horace has warned other poets against:

*vilibus in ludis dictari carmina malis* <sup>1</sup>

On this line Porphyrio comments: *Ludis litterariis*

*dicit.* <sup>2</sup> In the first passage quoted we may rightly assume that he is picturing his own book being used in *ludi litterarii*. However, on *cum tibi sol tepidus* Porphyrio comments:

*Secundum morem librariorum locutus est, qui circum quartam vel quintam horam dictata pueris praebere consueverint,*  
 . . . <sup>3</sup>

So here again *librarius* is used for *ludi magister*. *Elementa docentem* in Horace points to general ABC, not specific practice in transcribing. Porphyrio, however, does not hesitate to call the teachers involved *librarii*.

<sup>1</sup>*Sat. 1.10.75. Poems being read in ludi litterarii was an insult. Epirota, a grammaticus, lectured on contemporary poets (Suet. Gram.16) and having one's poetry read here was one pathway to fame. Horace boasts that he is even above this, however: non ego nobilium scriptorum auditor et ultor/grammaticas ambire tribus et pulpita dignor (Epist.1.19. 39f.).*

<sup>2</sup>Ed. Holder, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 366.

On occasion it was felt necessary to indicate that the *librarius* was a teacher, not a clerk. We have already seen *librarii qui docere possint* mentioned in the *Digest*. Porphyrio on one occasion calls Orbilius *librarius magister*. We find a *librarius doctor* mentioned in two epitaphs.<sup>1</sup> However, by Jerome's time, *librarius* is used without qualification for *ludi litterarii magister*. In a letter offering advice on a girl's education Jerome writes:

*Magister probae aetatis et vitae atque eruditionis est eligendus, nec, puto, erubescit doctus vir id facere vel in propinqua vel in nobili virgine, quod Aristoteles fecit in Philippi filio, ut ipse librariorum vilitate initia ei traderet litterarum.*<sup>2</sup>

There are two points to notice here, firstly that a higher teacher is going to undertake the duties of the *ludi litterarii magister*, and, secondly, that Jerome calls primary teachers *librarii* for *ludi litterarii magistri* and not just as a term meaning *persons who teach book-writing*, for this letter draws heavily on Quintilian in general, and this very passage finds a parallel in Quintilian:

*An Philippus Macedonum rex Alexandro filio suo prima litterarum elementa tradi ab Aristotele, summo eius aetatis philosopho, voluisset, aut ille suscepisset hoc officium, si non studiorum initia et a perfectissimo quoque optime tractari et pertinere ad summam credidisset.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dessau 7752: *C. Afranio Clari lib. Graphico, doctori librario. CIL 6.3413; doctor librarius de sacra via* (Authenticity doubted by Henzen perhaps unjustly according to Dessau).

<sup>2</sup>*Ep.* 107.4.

<sup>3</sup>*Quint.* 1.1.23.

In the context in which this occurs, Quintilian is arguing for attention being paid to the elements of learning. Quintilian does not mention any teacher at this stage specifically, but Jerome includes the name for such teachers, *librarii*. The expression *vilitate librariorum* does imply that it was not normal for the upper-classes to employ the services of such people and this is in keeping with the low status of *ludi magistri* noted before.<sup>1</sup> In fact, when we turn to examine the legal relationship between them and the state we shall see their low position and a further reason for their disappearance.

State privileges were handed mainly to *rhetoires* and *grammatici*, and we should not be surprised, therefore, if any teacher who possibly could, styled himself *grammaticus* rather than *librarius* or *ludi magister*. As a *grammaticus*, a teacher had the prospect of a municipal or a state chair, that is both position and a fixed salary.<sup>2</sup>

Initially the Roman state showed rather a lack of concern about education:

*Principio disciplinam puerilem, de qua Graeci multum frustra laborarunt, et in qua una Polybius noster hospes nostrorum institutorum neglegentiam accusat, nullam certam*

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 132ff.

<sup>2</sup>For state and municipal chairs see Marrou, *Hist. édu.*, pp. 403; 405-6; 407-10.

*aut destinata legibus aut publice exposita aut unam omnium esse voluerunt.*<sup>1</sup>

Julius Caesar encouraged teachers to stay in Rome:

*Omnesque medicinam Romae professores et liberalium artium doctores, quo libentius et ipsi urbem incolerent, et ceteri appeterent, civitate donavit.*<sup>2</sup>

*Liberalium artium* implies *grammatici* and *rhetores*, not *ludi magistri*.<sup>3</sup> Augustus showed some respect for teachers but again we may infer that they were higher teachers on a par with doctors, just as in the passage about Caesar's privileges to teachers it is higher teachers who are meant, and along with them doctors are mentioned:

*Magna vero quondam sterilitate, ac difficili remedio, cum . . . peregrinos omnes, exceptis medicis et praeceptoribus partemque servitiorum Urbe expulisset.*<sup>4</sup>

Vespasian was the first emperor to really involve the state in education. He granted exemptions to *grammatici* and *rhetores*<sup>5</sup> and set up state chairs of rhetoric: *Ingenia et*

<sup>1</sup>Cic. Rep. 4.3.

<sup>2</sup>Suet. Jul. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. the passage from Rufinus quoted p. 13 where the teaching of the *ludus litterarius* is sharply differentiated from *liberales artes*.

<sup>4</sup>Suet. Aug. 42.

<sup>5</sup>Edict granting exemptions (75 A.D.) found at Pergamum. First published, Herzog, Sb. Akad. Berlin (=McCrum and Woodhead, 458).



*artes vel maxime fovit; primus e fisco Latinis Graecisque rhetoribus annua centena constituit.*<sup>1</sup> Jerome tells us: *Quintilianus ex Hispania Calgurritanus primus Romae publicam scholam et salarium e fisco accepit et claruit.*<sup>2</sup> He is presumably mistaken, however, in dating this to 88 A.D. Antoninus Pius seems to have extended Vespasian's institution: *Rhetoribus et philosophis per omnes provincias et honores et salaria detulit.*<sup>3</sup> Vespasian's exemptions for *rhetores et grammatici* seem to have been confirmed by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.<sup>4</sup> Alexander Severus helped all kinds of teachers, but not primary ones:

*Rhetoribus, grammaticis, medicis, haruspicibus, mathematicis, mechanicis, architectis salaria instituit et auditoria decrevit et discipulos cum annonis pauperum filios modo ingenuos dari iussit.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Suet. Vesp. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Jerome *Chronicle* anno 88.

<sup>3</sup>S.H.A. Ant. Pius 11.

<sup>4</sup>Dig. 27.1.6.8; cf. Dig. 50.4.18.30.

<sup>5</sup>S.H.A. Sev. Alex. 44.4.

Moreover, *ludi litterarii magistri* were often excluded by law. The Theodosian Code grants immunities to teachers:

*Medicos, grammaticos et professores alios litterarum immunes esse cum rebus, quas in civitatibus suis possident, praecipimus et honoribus fungi.*<sup>1</sup>

*Beneficia divorum retro principum confirmantes medicos et professores litterarum, uxores etiam et filios eorum ab omni functione et ab omnibus muneribus publicis vacare praecipimus . . . quo facilius liberalibus studiis et memoratis artibus multos instituant.*<sup>2</sup>

Although one might think that these laws included all teachers, the following passage makes this unlikely:

*Per omnem dioecesim commissam magnificentiae tuae frequentissimis in civitatibus, quae pollent et eminent claritudine, praeceptorum optimi quique erudiendae praesident iuventuti: rhetores loquimur et grammaticos Atticae Romanaeque doctrinae.*<sup>3</sup>

And the instruction here is paralleled in an earlier edict:

*Magistros studiorum doctoresque excellere oportet moribus primum, deinde facundia. Sed quia singulis civitatibus adesse ipse non possum, iubeo, quisque docere vult, non repente nec temere prosiliat ad hoc munus, sed iudicio ordinis probatus decretum curialium mereatur optimorum conspirante consensu. Hoc enim decretum ad me tractandum referetur, ut altiore quodam honore nostro iudicio studiis civitatum accedant.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>13.3.1.

<sup>2</sup>13.3.3; cf. also 13.3.10.

<sup>3</sup>13.3.11; cf. also 13.3.16 where *grammatici*, *oratores* and *philosophiae praeceptores* are named.

<sup>4</sup>13.3.5.

From the previous passage we can rightly infer that here the *magistros studiorum doctoresque* are *grammatici* and *rhetores*. If this is true here, it follows that the unspecified teachers in the first two passages quoted are *grammatici* and *rhetores* likewise.<sup>1</sup> A further passage shows that higher teachers are not always specified but are meant:

*Si qui erudiendis adolescentibus vita pariter et facundia idoneus erit, vel novum instituat auditorium vel repetat intermissum.*<sup>2</sup>

Obviously a primary teacher would not be teaching in anything as grand as an *auditorium*. Besides, in the second passage quoted we see that *liberalibus studiis* are mentioned. This clearly implies higher education.<sup>3</sup>

There are other considerations which further support this view. Vespasian granted privileges to *grammatici* and *rhetores*, which were confirmed by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, as we have seen. It is not improbable that this formed the basis of the enactments in the Theodosian Code. Therefore, the clauses in it are likely to deal only with *grammatici* and *rhetores*.

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<sup>1</sup>For *ludi litterarii magistri* excluded from the title *professores*, cf. *Dig.* 50.13.1.6. So it is all the more unlikely that they could be included in *professores alios litterarum* in the first passage and also in 13.3.17.

<sup>2</sup>13.3.6.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Dig.* 50.13.1.1 and *Isid. Orig.* 1.4.2.

That *ludi litterarii magistri* were excluded from such privileges, there can be no doubt: *Divus Magnus Antoninus cum patre rescripsit. Eos qui primis litteris pueros inducunt, non habere vacationem divus Magnus Antoninus rescripsit.*<sup>1</sup> In his third book Ulpian states: *Qui pueros primas litteras docent, immunitatem a civilibus muneribus non habent.*<sup>2</sup>

It seems that at one stage primary teachers tried to encroach on certain rights:

*Ludi quoque litterarii magistris, licet non sint professores, tamen usurpatum est, ut his quoque ius dicatur: iam et librariis et notariis et calculatoribus sive tabulariis.*<sup>3</sup>

That they did not generally have the right mentioned is implied by the opening sentence of this section, however:

*Praeses provinciae de mercedibus ius dicere solet sed praeceptoribus tantum studiorum liberalium. Liberalia autem studia accipimus quae Graeci ἑλευθέρια appellant: rhetores continebuntur, grammatici, geometrae.*<sup>4</sup>

This passage in itself shows the preferential treatment given to teachers of higher education.

<sup>1</sup>*Dig.* 50.4.11.4.

<sup>2</sup>*Dig.* 50.5.2.8.

<sup>3</sup>*Dig.* 50.13.1.6.

<sup>4</sup>50.13.1.1.

I think it is significant that in the abbreviated *Digest*, the *Codex Iustinianus*, which was the applied law, this stipulation is omitted. Included are excerpts from the Theodosian Code, which I have held are concerned with *grammatici* and *rhetores*, and the following statement: *Oratione divi Pii liberalium studiorum professores, non etiam calculatores continentur.*<sup>1</sup> What they are encompassed in is presumably the *immunitas* of the foregoing clause. Now if *calculatores* are excluded, so are *ludi litterarii magistri* by implication. For example, in Diocletian's Edict a *calculator* gets one and a half times as much as a primary teacher *per pupil*.<sup>2</sup>

So, a review of literary and legal sources has shown that primary teachers were excluded from state privileges. Therefore, we would expect teachers to style themselves *grammatici* or otherwise to avail themselves of these exemptions and privileges. And there is certain evidence for this happening, for Ausonius implies that some teachers should not really qualify as *grammatici*. He mentions a Iucundus who rashly assumed the teacher's chair and did not deserve the title *grammaticus*.<sup>3</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup>10.53.4.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* also Mart. 10.62 and *Dig.* 50.13.1.6.

<sup>3</sup>*Prof. Burd.* 9.

this very ambition redeems him in Ausonius' eyes: *hoc ipso care magis studio*. Doubtless there were many aspiring *grammatici* in this category. Ausonius also mentions one Ammonius,<sup>1</sup> *doctrina exiguus* who achieved little renown, and one Marcellus, *grammaticus praetenuis meriti*.<sup>2</sup> We have seen too state concern over the standard of *grammatici*,<sup>3</sup> and perhaps we have a further example of someone rashly jumping to the profession of *grammaticus* in the case of Origen. At the youthful age of seventeen, or soon after, he became a *grammaticus* to support himself on his parents' deaths.<sup>4</sup>

It may well be that by the fifth century it had become so normal for most teachers to style themselves *grammatici* or higher that the Theodosian Code, published in 438, failed to bother with a distinction between primary and higher teachers because there were so few people called *ludi litterarii magistri*. While helping to account for the low standard of some *grammatici*, such

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<sup>1</sup>*Prof. Burd.* 10.30ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* 18.13-14'.

<sup>3</sup>*Cod. Theod.* 13.3.11,6,5 and for concern at another level *ibid.* 7; and, of course, *Dig.* 50.13.1.6 and *Cod. Iust.* 10.53.4 discussed above.

<sup>4</sup>*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* 6.2.12,15.

a development would also have left the way clear for the *librarius* to undertake elementary education.

It seems, therefore, that the *ludus litterarius* was a kind of technical or vocational school which was attended by children of the lower classes who wanted to apply their learning to trades and professions considered beneath the dignity of a noble Roman. This is implied by the facts that the education given by the *ludi magister* was classed as illiberal and that the practical application of his instruction is implied by Latin authors. The disappearance of the *ludi magister* and his replacement by the *librarius* confirms that he was a technical teacher, like the *notarius* or *calculator*.

## CONCLUSION

The evidence which forms the basis for the modern view of the threefold division of Roman education is not so compelling as to permit the certainty which modern scholars have attributed to this division. Apuleius names three teachers but this may be dictated by literary considerations.<sup>1</sup> He does not necessarily imply that all children went to three teachers in succession, although the idea of progression is present. Marcus Aurelius and Severus Alexander enjoyed a three-tier education, but they were rather special cases.<sup>2</sup> There is ample evidence to suggest that in general the upper-class Romans were conscious of a two-fold division in education, the stages being *grammaticae* and rhetoric.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine is an example of a relatively poor child who went through three schools. It is possible that there were others like Augustine, but it may be suspected that they were few in number. The advanced study of literature and rhetoric had little practical value for the lower-classes.

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<sup>1</sup>See p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 6f.

<sup>3</sup>See chapter 4.



People of these classes will have desired a more practical education, and I have attempted to show that the *ludus litterarius* was a technical or vocational school whose graduates used their acquired skills for professions regarded as menial by the upper-classes.<sup>1</sup> The upper-classes had a conception of what learning was fit for a gentleman<sup>2</sup> so that Ausonius may well be reflecting an aristocratic exclusiveness about higher education when he writes as follows:

*sed iam non poteris, Theon, docere,  
nec fas est mihi regio magistro  
plebeiam numeros docere pulpam.*<sup>3</sup>

If few from the lower-classes went to schools of higher learning, it is extremely doubtful whether any number of the upper-classes ever set foot inside a *ludus litterarius*. I have shown the low social position of the *ludi magister* which is evident in the contempt shown him by upper-class writers<sup>4</sup> and implied by his position under Roman law.<sup>5</sup> One reason for his lowly status was the simple

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 135ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* Cic. *Off.* 1.150-1, quoted p. 129.

<sup>3</sup>*Ep.* 14.94-6.

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 132ff.

<sup>5</sup>See pp. 159ff.

nature of his teaching.<sup>1</sup> Another, I have argued, was the fact that he trained his pupils for lower-class trades.<sup>2</sup>

The scope of upper-class and lower-class education of course overlapped. All children had to read, write and count. The teaching of the *ludi magister* was aimed at reading, writing, and counting for practical purposes. He naturally used Latin and perhaps Greek literature in his teaching and taught basic grammar.<sup>3</sup> But the acquisition of the abilities mentioned above was the end of his instruction. Upper-class children had to learn the same elements as those of the lower-classes. But this was not an end in itself, but a preliminary to higher literary studies. In fact, although the elements were the sum of learning in the *ludus litterarius*, they were regarded as trivial by the upper-classes. Whether elementary instruction was taught by a literate slave, *paedagogus* or the *grammaticus* himself, it was not regarded as a separate stage in education but the rather unimportant beginnings of *grammatice*. *Grammatice*, in its wide sense which included the elements and advanced literary studies,<sup>4</sup> was the primary stage for the upper-classes.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *trivialis scientia*, Quint. 1.4.27.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 142ff.

<sup>3</sup>See e.g. Quint. 1.4.27.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. pp. 68ff.

The age limits which modern scholars impose on the supposed three-stages of education cannot be supported by the ancient evidence<sup>1</sup> and a survey of the studies attributed to the first two of these stages and the amount of learning the pupils had to do makes these limits suspect. As with the formation of the view of the three-tier system, it seems scholars have been influenced by the age divisions in modern educational systems and have been too prone to decide by analogy.

In my opinion, the present nature of the evidence makes any schematic division between primary and secondary stages impossible. There was no state control of grades and throughout the expanse of the Roman Empire some variation seems likely. The ancients themselves did not always agree in their classification of teachers<sup>2</sup> and the fact that teachers could include what they wanted on their syllabus complicates the issue of division. But, with due allowance for exceptions, if any general division is to be placed on these stages, it should be one which separates technical from literary and lower-class from upper-class education.

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<sup>1</sup>See pp. 32ff.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Suet. calls Orbilius a *grammaticus*, Porphyrio, a *ludi magister*.

## APPENDIX A

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS AT ROME

Scholars put little faith in the literary evidence for schools before 200 B.C. and assert that elementary instruction was given almost exclusively at home by parents or relatives in early Rome. ~~It is held that education was a~~ purely family affair.<sup>1</sup> However, the evidence does not allow the degree of certainty which exists.

Two passages, one from Tacitus, the other from the younger Pliny, are cited as evidence for family education at an early date. Messalla, in the *Dialogus*, remarks that in former times an elderly female relative was chosen to look after a child's moral and academic welfare:

*eligeretur autem maior aliqua natus propinqua, cuius probatis spectatisque moribus omnis eiusdem familiae suboles committeretur; eorum qua neque dicere fas erat quod turpe dictu, neque facere quod inhonestum factu videretur. ac non studia modo curasque, sed remissiones etiam lususque puerorum sanctitate quadam ac verecundia temperabat.*<sup>2</sup>

But it is not clear whether the speaker is referring to a state of affairs before 200 B.C. No example of an elderly female relative acting as a tutor is given. Mothers who looked after their sons' education are mentioned - Cornelia,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. e.g. Marrou, *Hist. éducat.*, p. 316-20; Gwynn, *Roman Educ. from Cic. to Quint.*, chap.I; Wilkins, *Roman Educ.*, chap.2.

<sup>2</sup>*Dial.* 28.

mother of the Gracchi, Aurelia, mother of Caesar and Atia, the mother of Augustus, all of whom lived after 200 B.C. and were sufficiently emancipated to direct their sons' *studia*. It is doubtful, however, whether in early times women were educated in reading and writing. The women named are rather special cases and do seem to be renowned because of the novelty of their actions. Although they cared for their sons' studies, they may not have taught. In any case Tacitus is not good evidence for conditions at least three centuries past, and this statement is scarcely solid evidence for mothers or female relatives giving children academic instruction.

Pliny, in a moralizing tone, looks back to the old days when fathers or elders taught their sons: *Suus cuique parens pro magistro, aut cui parens non erat maximus quisque et uetustissimus pro parente*.<sup>1</sup> Again it is impossible to decide what period Pliny has in mind and it would therefore be rash to assume that his statement is incontestably true for early Rome. He may be referring to no further back than the first or second century B.C. Also, he is not thinking about schooling or academic studies, but the training of adolescents in the *tirocinium militiae et fori* as the words which precede the above statement show:

*Erat autem antiquitus institutum, ut a maioribus natu non auribus modo uerum etiam oculis disceremus, quae facienda mox ipsi ac per uices quasdam tradenda minoribus haberemus.*

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<sup>1</sup>Ep. 8.14.4.

*Inde adolescentuli statim castrensibus stipendiis imbuebantur ut imperare parendo, duces agere dum sequuntur adsuescerent; inde honores petitori adsistebant curiae foribus, et consilii publici spectatores ante quam consortes erant.*

There is nothing here to rule out the existence of elementary teachers or schools before the third century B.C.

Perhaps more can be inferred from Plutarch's account of how Cato the Elder handled his son's education:

<sup>2</sup>Ἐπεὶ δ' ἤρξατο συνιέναι, παραλαβὼν αὐτὸς ἐδίδασκε γράμματα καὶ τοὶ χαρίεντα δοῦλον εἶχε γραμματιστὴν ὄνομα Χίλωνα πολλοὺς διδάσκοντα παῖδας.<sup>1</sup>

If we accept Plutarch's statement - and perhaps the amount of detail he gives about Cato's actions in this matter suggests some concrete basis for the story<sup>2</sup> - Cato's action may well have been reactionary. At an early date when literacy was not widespread, it seems likely that the ability to write will have been passed from father to son.

<sup>1</sup>*Cato Maior* 20.

<sup>2</sup>Plutarch describes how Cato wrote out stories in large letters, and taught him to throw the javelin, fence, swim and ride. However, personal supervision by a parent is always mentioned as an unusual point of merit, cf. the passages from Pliny and Tac. quoted above; Suet. Aug. 64.5: *Nepotes et litteras et notare aliaque rudimenta per se plerumque docuit ac nihil aeque elaboravit quam ut imitarentur chirographum suum*; Tac. Ann. 6.15: *Cassius plebeii Romae generis, verum antiqui honoratique, et severa patris disciplina educatus* . . . Is it being over sceptical to wonder whether the practice of noble ancient traditions was a later attribution to the stories surrounding Cato, the embodiment of the old morality?

Plutarch mentions Chilon, the literate slave who taught. There seems to have been a demand for such slaves in the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup> But the use of literate slaves for teaching purposes also existed in the third century B.C. The school of Sp. Carvilius, freedman of the man who was consul 234 B.C., probably was set up in this century. Spurius was presumably carrying on the job he had been put to as a slave, as was the practice of most freedmen, and probably taught the children connected with the consul's household. How far into the past the use of literate slaves for teaching should be projected is a matter for conjecture. It is not unlikely, however, that the parent should delegate the chore of teaching children to competent slaves whenever possible and literate slaves may well have been in this service long before the third century B.C.

According to Plutarch Sp. Carvilius was the first to accept money for teaching. This need not mean that he was the first professional teacher. Previously teachers may have been in a position analogous to that of advocates, who received presents rather than payment. Spurius may have been the first to stipulate fees. M. Antonius Gniphos's practice may reflect that current before Spurius: *nec unquam de mercedibus pactus*,

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<sup>1</sup>*Cf.* the price paid for Lutatius Daphnis (Suet. *Gram.* 3) and Cato's practice of giving loans to his slaves to educate others, presumably to increase their value (Plut. *Cato Maior* 21). Terence was educated at his owner's trouble initially, it would seem, to increase his value (Suet. *Vita Ter. ad init.*).

*eoque plura ex liberalitate discentium consecutus.*<sup>1</sup>

This theory has the support of most scholars.<sup>2</sup> But it is questionable whether the teaching profession ever enjoyed a status comparable to that of advocates. In fact, Gniphio may have been attempting to raise his status. Perhaps it is better to envisage early teachers in a client-patron relationship. Ennius and Livius Andronicus were probably in this position.<sup>3</sup> Ennius was under the patronage of various people, first, according to tradition, Cato, then Scipio Africanus and M. Fulvius Nobilior. Livius was under the patronage of the Livii Salinatores. Suetonius tells us Livius and Ennius taught *domi forisque*.<sup>4</sup> Both were literary figures and relied on patronage for support. *Domi* probably means, therefore, not in their own homes, but in those of their patrons.<sup>5</sup> In

<sup>1</sup>Suet. *Gram.* 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. e.g. Wilkins, *Roman Educ.*, pp. 23-4; Gwynn, *Roman Educ. from Cic. to Quint.*, pp. 30-31; E. Jullien, *Les professeurs de littérature*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ennius was a freeman and the traditional view is that Livius was a freedman (though this has been challenged by W. Beare, "When did Livius Andronicus come to Rome?", *CQ.* 34 (1940) 11-19, where he argues that Livius was a freeman). The question of their patronage is not in doubt, however.

<sup>4</sup>*Gram.* 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Foris* means that they also held public schools like that of Sp. Carvilius.



any case, when a household had a literary figure in its clientele he would be a prime candidate for teacher of the children of the family. The use of a client for this purpose is not unlikely to date before the time of Livius and Ennius.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of schools or collective education must have been known to the Romans before the third century B.C. We saw that references in Plautus suggest the existence of schools was common by his day. In Athens schools had existed from at least the fifth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The cities of Magna Graecia had contacts with the Greek mainland and Rome had trade dealings with Athens from the sixth century B.C.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Rome traded with Athens in this period does not in itself mean that Athenian education methods were adopted. However, either through contact with Athens or Magna Graecia, it is certain that the idea of schools was known at Rome from the fifth century and such knowledge may have accelerated the

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<sup>1</sup>Livy's comment in connection with the school-master of the Falisci is worth noting in this connection (Livy 5.27): *Principum liberos, sicut fere fit, qui scientia videbatur praecellere eridiebat.* This teacher, if he existed, may well have been a client (not a professional teacher).

<sup>2</sup>See Marrou *Hist. édu.*, pp. 73; 76-7. The references cited are Ar. *Nub.* 964-5; Plut. *Them.* 10; cf. *ibid.*, 482 n.7 for schools at Chios and Astypalaia where Hdt. 6.27 and Paus. 6.9.6 are cited.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Gjerstadt, "Cult. Hist. of Early Rome", pp. 22, 35; "Trade Relations with Greece in Archaic Rome", *Mélanges A. Piganiol*, (Paris, 1966), 791-4.

development of collective education.

Although there is no concrete evidence for the development of schools and teaching in early Rome, it is not unlikely that the progression was something like this:

- (1) Originally the knowledge of reading and writing was confined to a few who transmitted it within their own families.
- (2) The Roman conception of a family was wider in scope than ours and relatives of varying distances came to be educated in one household where someone knew the art of reading and writing. This teacher was either parent or relative. This group education constitutes a school.
- (3) When there was a literate slave in the household the chore of teaching was given to him. Alternatively a qualified client undertook this duty in return for patronage.
- (4) Persons may have offered their services as teachers in return for patronage or presents, thus making teaching a profession.
- (5) Eventually (perhaps with Sp. Carvilius) schooling was placed on a strictly commercial footing, although parental and client education did not completely disappear. Sometimes the school was run by a freedman or freeman, sometimes by a literate slave for his owner (e.g. Cato and Chilon).

## APPENDIX B

### THE GRAMMATICUS AND THE TEACHING OF POETRY

The following passages are intended to illustrate that the principal concern of the *grammaticus* was poetry and that *grammaticae* in a narrow sense could cover the advanced interpretation of poetry. I have selected passages from authors of different dates to show that from the first century B.C. through the Empire there was at least a theoretical idea about the principal duties of the *grammaticus*:

*Omnia fere, quae sunt conclusa nunc artibus dispersa et dissipata quondam fuerunt . . . in grammaticis poetarum pertractatio, verborum interpretatio, pronuntiandi quidam sonus.*<sup>1</sup>

*Grammaticae officia, ut adserit Varro, constant in partibus quattuor, lectione, enarratione, emendatione, iudicio. Lectio est varia cuiusque scripti enuntatio, serviens dignitati personarum exprimensque animi habitum cuiusque. Enarratio est obscurorum sensuum quaestionumve explanatio. Emendatio est recorrectio errorum qui per scripturam dictionemve fiunt. Iudicium est aestimatio qua poema ceteraque scripta perpendumus.*<sup>2</sup>

*Grammaticae circa curam sermonis versatur, et si latius evagari vult circa historias, iam ut longissime fines suos proferat, circa carmina*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cic. *De Or.* 1.187.

<sup>2</sup>*Gramm. Rom. Frag.* ed. Funaioli, Varro 236.

<sup>3</sup>Sen. *Ep.* 88.3. Seneca may well be right in viewing the *curam sermonis* as the basic concern. Suet (*Gram.* 4) tells us that in earlier times *grammatici* taught rhetoric, and the care of speech and pronunciation may originally have been directed to forensic speaking.

*Haec igitur professio [i.e. grammaticae], cum brevissime in duas partes dividatur, recte loquendi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem . . .*<sup>1</sup>

*Ars grammatica praecipue consistit in intellectu poetarum et in recte scribendi loquendique ratione.*<sup>2</sup>

In this last statement we see writing<sup>3</sup> mentioned and the passage which draws on Varro mentions reading. We have seen that reading and writing were taught at the primary stage<sup>4</sup> and it is obvious that this reading was a more advanced expressive reading, somewhat like modern elocution, and the *recte scribendi ratio* will have dealt with stylistic writing rather than the actual formation of letters taught at the primary stage.

It is evident that detailed study of poetry was viewed as a particular concern of the *grammaticus*. For example, Cicero casually comments: *eodemque modo et oraculorum et vaticinationum sunt explanatores, ut grammatici poetarum.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Quint. 1.4.1.

<sup>2</sup>Sergius: Keil 4, 486.

<sup>3</sup>*Marius Victorinus*, (4th cent. A.D.?) in a passage drawn from Varro, includes writing among the duties of a *grammaticus* as does Diomedes. See passages quoted below.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Quint. 1.4.1.

<sup>5</sup>*Div.* 1.116; cf. *Tusc.* 2.11.27.

There are some passages where writers other than poets are mentioned. Marius Victorinus implies that Varro classed the writings of historians(?) and orators as subject matter for the *grammaticus*:

*Ut Varroni placet, ars grammatica, quae a nobis litteratura dicitur, scientia est [eorum] quae a poetis historicis oratoribusque dicuntur ex parte maiore. Eius praecipua officia sunt quattuor, ut ipsi placet, scribere, legere, intellegere, probare.*<sup>1</sup>

Or again Diomedes says:

*Grammatica est specialiter scientia exercitata lectionis et expositionis quae apud poetas et scriptores ducuntur. Tota autem grammatica consistit praecipue intellectu poetarum et scriptorum et historiarum prompta expositione et in recte loquendi scribendique ratione.*<sup>2</sup>

Since there was no formal curriculum or government control of subjects taught, the *grammaticus* was free to include prose authors if he so desired. But the weight of the evidence points to poetry being the main and usually the sole concern, and a further brief proof of this is Quintilian's suggestion that prose writers should be introduced to the rhetorician's curriculum and it is significant that he uses the *enarratio poetarum* of the *grammaticus* as a comparison with his proposed innovation:

*Interim, quia prima rhetorices rudimenta tractamus, non omittendum videtur id quoque, ut moneam, quantum sit collaturus ad profectum discentium rhetor, si, quem admodum a grammaticis exigitur poetarum enarratio, ita ipse quoque historiae atque*

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<sup>1</sup>Gramm. Rom. Frag. ed. Funaioli, Varro 234.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Funaioli at above reference. Keil 1, 426.13.

*etiam magis orationum lectione susceptos a se discipulos instruxerit.*<sup>1</sup>

A technical term connected with the work of the *grammaticus* is *praelegere*, *praelectio*. The root sense of the word is *to read before* and presumably the teacher read a passage expressively to be copied by his pupils. Quintilian says:

*Grammaticus quoque si de loquendi ratione disserat, si quaestiones explicet, historias exponat, poemata enarret, tot illa discent quot audient. At enim emendationi praelectionique numeris obstat.*<sup>2</sup>

*Emendatio* could either be the alteration of the students' texts to make them conform with the master's copy (in which case a large number of pupils lining up and comparing their text with the master's would waste a lot of time in class) or *emendatio* could be the correction of their reading, that is, *emendatio lectionis*,<sup>3</sup> (a feat which again a large number would hinder). Whichever meaning is accepted, the *emendatio* would seem to be connected closely with *praelectio* and the

<sup>1</sup>2.5.1.

<sup>2</sup>1.2.14-15.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *emendata lectio*, Quint., 1.4.3.

sense of expressive delivery by the teacher fits best here.<sup>1</sup>

But that the term had a wider significance, which included all the explanation and elucidation by the *grammaticus*, is shown by the following passages:

*Et hercle praelectio, quae in hoc adhibetur ut facile atque distincte pueri scripta oculis sequantur, etiam illa, quae vim cuiusque verbi, si quod minus usitatum incidat, docet, multum infra rhetoris officium existimanda est.*<sup>2</sup>

This passage is of special significance because it shows different sorts of *praelectio*. I translate: And indeed the *praelectio* which is concerned with enabling the children to follow their text with ease and comprehension, yes, even that (other) *praelectio*, where the meaning and force of every unusual word is explained, are rated far below the duty of the rhetor.

<sup>1</sup>Colson, while rightly stating that *praelectio* could be used loosely to include *historiarum expositio* and *poetarum enarratio*, rejects the particular meaning I would give *praelectio* here (the meaning which Spalding gave it). He cannot understand how numbers could hinder *talis praelectio, qua singulis pueris, quae ipsi sunt pronunciatori, diligenter praeunt magistri* (Spalding). If the class were large and each pupil had to read in turn (1) the actual reading would be prolonged and boring (2) the master would have a long task correcting the pronunciation of each pupil (3) after the first few pupils had made their attempts, the rest would have forgotten the master's correct pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup>Quint. 2.5.4.

Again a section begins: *In praelegendo grammaticus et illa quidem minora praestare debebit.*<sup>1</sup> Here follows a list of *minora* which includes metrical analysis, figures of speech, rare words, style and diction.

Therefore, when we find a teacher dealing with poetry or one whose teaching is described as *praelectio*, we may rightly infer that he is involved in secondary education. On occasion the context makes this obvious. For example, we already know that Q. Caecilius Epirota was a *grammaticus*, when in the *De Grammaticis* Suetonius says of him: *Primus dicitur latine ex tempore disputasse, primusque Vergilium et alios poetas novas praelegere coepisse.*<sup>2</sup> But it is the technical term and the fact that poetry is involved which enable us to identify the *magister* as a *grammaticus* when Martial asks:

*An iuvat ad tragicos soccum transferre cothurnos  
aspera vel paribus bella tonare modis  
praelegat ut tumidus rauce te voce magister  
oderit et grandis virgo bonusque puer.*<sup>3</sup>

When instruction is identified as that belonging to the special sphere of the *grammaticus* according to the above reasoning a detailed justification has not always be thought necessary.

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<sup>1</sup>1.8.13.

<sup>2</sup>*Gram.* 16.

<sup>3</sup>8.3.12-15.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Grammatice* : Latin transliteration of the Greek γραμματική. The term could cover everything from the rudiments of letters to advanced and detailed literary criticism, but could also be used in a narrower sense of advanced literary study. (See pp. 68ff. and Appendix B). For *grammatice*, *grammatica*, *ars grammatica* or the pure Latin term *litteratura* (q.v.) are sometimes used.
- Grammaticus* : A teacher of *grammatice* (q.v.). This teacher was concerned mainly with the interpretation of poetry. (See Appendix B). His exposition of authors could be very detailed and involve metre, syntax, orthography, etymology on the grammatical side, and, on the literary side, the explanation of *historiae*, points of history, mythology, geography, astronomy etc. (See Quint. 1.4-8). The *grammaticus* also supervised the primary exercises of rhetoric, the *progymnasmata* - paraphrases of fables, essays on memorable deeds and personages (Quint. 1.9). Quintilian (2.1.4) well emphasizes the unlimited breadth of the concerns of the *grammaticus*: *nam tenuis a fonte assumptis poetarum historicorumque viribus pleno iam satis alveo fluit, cum praeter rationem recte loquendi non parum alioqui copiosam prope omnium maximarum artium scientiam amplexa sit*. The *grammaticus* probably taught elementary learning on occasion (see chapters 3 and 4) and his pupils were drawn mainly from the upper-classes.
- Librarius* : This word, like our work clerk, covered many professions connected with books and book-keeping. A special meaning of the word was *copyist*, that is, one who aided in the production of books in the ancient book trade, for which profession the *librarius* probably taught apprentices.

(See pp. 151ff.). Eventually *librarius* was used for *ludi magister* (q.v.).

*Litteratio* : A term proposed by Varro to denote the elementary stage of *grammaticae*. It was never adopted into educational terminology; however. (See pp. 71ff.).

*Litterator* : A term used on occasion to denote the *ludi magister* (q.v.). Although modern works usually give *litterator* in this sense, it is rare, occurring only four times in extant literature. (See Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Roman Educ.", 469ff.). It is more common as the pure Latin equivalent of *grammaticus* (see Bower, *ibid.*).

*Litteratura* : The Latin equivalent of γραμματική (see pp. 70f.). This term was not used so frequently as *grammaticae*, but does occur in various writers of the Empire (see Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Roman Educ.", 474ff.).

*Prima litteratura* : Used by Seneca (Ep. 88.20) and Apuleius (*De dog. Plat.* 1.2) to indicate elementary learning (the meaning which Varro had intended for *litteratio*).

*Litteratus* : Said by Suetonius (*Gram.* 4) to have been once the Latin term for *grammaticus*. The validity of this statement has been challenged (Bower, "Some t.t.'s in Roman Educ.", 462ff.; see also pp. 73ff.). The word exists throughout Latin literature in the meaning *learned, educated*.

*Ludus* : In educational terminology, the word for school. It could denote any kind of school (cf. Pseudo-Asconius on Cic. *Div. Caec.* 47: *Omnem enim scholam ludum dixere Romani . . .*).

*Ludus litterarius* : A school where elementary instruction was given. Modern scholars compare this to the modern primary school, but the *ludus litterarius* was more like a technical school (see chapter 5).

*Ludi litterarii magister* : The teacher in the *ludus litterarius*.

*Ludi magister* : A more usual shortened version of the above (see p. 126 ).

*Primus magister* : Used for *ludi magister* once (Aug. Conf. 1.13.20; see pp. 7ff.).

*Paedagogus*: Transliteration of the Greek παιδαγωγός - a person, usually a slave, whose basic duty was to accompany a child as a moral guardian. But the *paedagogus* probably also gave elementary instruction (see pp. 88ff.).  
*Paedagogi* appeared in Rome at an early date, for Plautus refers to them as though they were commonplace (cf. the portrait of Lydus in the *Bacchides*). Eventually freemen or freedmen took up the profession of *paedagogus* for the *Edict of Diocletian on Maximum Prices* provides a fixed fee per pupil for *paedagogi*.  
 Alternative names for the *paedagogus* are *comes*, *rector*, *pedisequus*, *monitor*, though these terms may have different nuances of meaning (cf. E. Schluppe "Paidagogos", RE, 18.2, 2380).

*Praeceptor* : A word for a teacher which indicates one whose instruction was above the elementary level. Often found in the phrase *praeceptor liberalium studiorum / artium* where *liberalia studia* point to the teaching of *rhetores* or *grammatici*. (See pp. 128ff; 159ff.).

*Praelectio* : This and the verb *praelegere* are t.t.'s which indicate the interpretation of literature by the *grammaticus*. (See Appendix B).

*Professor* : As with *praeceptor* (see above) this denotes teachers of advanced studies. A passage from the *Digest* (50.13.1.6) excludes *ludi magistri* from the title *professor* : *Ludi quoque litterarii magistris, licet non sint professores, tamen usurpatum est, ut . . .*

- Rhetor* : A teacher of rhetoric. (Gk.  $\rho\eta\tau\omega\rho$ ).
- Schola* : Like Greek  $\sigma\chi\omicron\lambda\eta$ , time given to learned debate. Also used of a place of learning, but of a place of higher study. I know of no instance where *schola* is used of a place confined to elementary learning. The term for a school where little more than the elements were taught is *ludus litterarius*.
- Subdoctor* : A teacher who was assistant to a *grammaticus*. This teacher may have taught less advanced pupils (see pp. 108f.). The verb *subdocere* exists in the meaning *to act as an assistant teacher* (Cic. Att. 8.4.1; Aug. Conf. 8.6.: *subdocere grammatico*). *Hypodisascalus* and *proscholus* are found as alternative terms for *subdoctor*.
- Studia liberalia* : The study of the *artes liberales* thought fit for a Roman gentleman (see pp. 128ff.). The *grammaticus* and *rhetor* were the teachers regularly associated with *liberalia studia*, cf. Digest 50.13.1.1: *liberalia autem studia accipimus, quae Graeci ἐλευθέρια appellant: rhetores continebantur, grammatici, geometrae*. The *ludi magister* was not regarded as a teacher of *liberalia studia*. (See A. Bernard, *La rémunération de professions liberales en droit Romain classique* (Paris: Domat Montchrestien, 1935, pp. 25ff. and pp. 159ff. above).

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