

Marquette University

e-Publications@Marquette

Bachelors' Theses

Dissertations, Theses, and Professional
Projects

5-1927

The Development of Roman Schools and Education

Katharine C. Davy

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/bachelor_essays



Part of the Education Commons

LIST OF REFERENCES

McQuinn, THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION 13.

Practise and Usage, The Private Life of the Romans, Chapter 3.

32-34. 1913.

By

Green, A Student's History of Education, Chapter 3. 33-41. 1913.

Katharine C. Davy

Wilkins, A. S., Roman Education. 1915.

Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria. Books 1 and 3.

The Delphian Course. Book 4, Roman Social Life: Chapter 4, Schools and

A Thesis submitted partially to fulfill the requirements for

Honour, Paul, The Degree of Bachelor of Arts. 1903.

0378.37
□31

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

MAY, 1927.



LIST OF REFERENCES

- McCormick, History of Education. Chapter 7: 53-61. 1915.
- Preston and Dodge, The Private Life of the Romans. Chapter 3.
57-66. 1893.
- Graves, A Student's History of Education. Chapter 3. 32-41. 1915.
- Wilkins, A. S., Roman Education. 1915.
- Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria. Books 1 and 2.
- The Delphian Course. Book 4, Roman Social Life: Chapter 4, Schools and
Education. 87-92. 1913.
- Monroe, Paul, History of Education. Chapter 4. 1905.
- I. General Survey
- II. The First Period
1. Practical Character of Education
2. Education in the Home
- a. Literary Training
- b. Religious Training
- c. Physical Exercise
- III. The Second Period
1. Beginning of Greek Influence
2. Elementary Education
3. Rise of the Grammar School
4. Schools of Rhetoric
5. Influence of Greek Philosophy
- a. Opposition
- IV. The Third Period
1. Nature of the Education of This Period
- a. Graeco-Roman
- b. Selective
2. Power of the Father Over the Life of the Child
3. Quintilian and His Ideal of Education
4. Elementary Education
5. The Grammar Schools

OUTLINE OF

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

1. General Survey

II. The First Period

1. Practical Character of Education

2. Education in the Home

a. Literary Training

b. Religious Training

c. Physical Exercise

III. The Second Period

1. Beginning of Greek Influence

2. Elementary Education

3. Rise of the Grammar School

4. Schools of Rhetoric

5. Influence of Greek Philosophy

a. Opposition

IV. The Third Period

1. Nature of the Education of This Period

a. Graeco-Roman

b. Selective

2. Power of the Father Over the Life of the Child

3. Quintilian and His Ideal of Education

4. Elementary Education

5. The Grammar Schools

a. Greek

b. Latin

c. Content-Material

6. Schools of Rhetoric

a. Purpose

b. Content-Material

c. Defects

7. Philosophy

8. Universities

V. Subsidion of Schools Into National System

1. Granting of Special Privileges to Teachers

2. Decree Whereby Schools Were to be Established Only by the

Government

VI. Decline of Education

The Roman education of the boys and girls in the early days of the republic was practical. The aim of the education was to teach them obedience to their parents and superiors, reverence for the gods, and their duties towards the state. The old Roman of this period had no time or desire for philosophical disquisitions, literary amusements, (such as the Greek plays), or physical exercises to develop a perfect body.

The child received its early training in the home at its mother's knee. Its primary training consisted in stories of Roman heroes, ballads, sermons and religious songs, and the laws of the twelve tables. As late in the middle class home after the fourth century, B. C., the children were taught reading, writing, and simple arithmetic. We have no definite evidence to show that elementary schools existed but if they

OK
 Education develops as a nation progresses. Roman education paralleled the growth of the Roman state. Thus we find three stages in the development of education, corresponding to the development and expansion of Rome. In the first period of the early Republic, education was elementary and solely a preparation for life and service to the state. In the second period, when Rome is expanding, fighting the Punic wars, and extending its boundaries, education is coming under the Greek influence and culture. In the third period, when Rome is an empire, a world state, education is Graeco-Roman; broadened and expanded to include that culture which the people of a world state demand. The Romans, now that they have conquered the world, have time for aesthetic development, moreover, the greatest profession is that of the orator, and the successful orator must have a well balanced cultural training.

Education under the early Republic was practical and occupational. Its aim was to train the boys and girls in the every day practical duties of life, to teach them obedience to their parents and superiors, reverence for the gods, and their duties towards the state. The old Roman of this period had no time or desire for philosophical discussions, literary amusements, (such as the Greek plays), or physical exercise to develop a perfect body.

The child received its early training in the home at its mother's knee. Its literary training consisted in stories of Roman heroes, ballads, martial and religious songs, and the laws of the twelve tables. At least in the better class homes after the fourth century, B. C., the children were taught reading, writing, and simple arithmetic. We have no definite evidence to show that elementary schools existed but if they were the state would have known. Physical exercise consisted in riding, run-

did the studies begun in the home, namely reading, writing, calculation, and the twelve tables were probably taught.

At about the age of seven, the boy left his mother's care and accompanied his father, from whom he learned efficiency in life. The son usually followed the profession or occupation of his father. This was particularly true in the case of the religious office of priest. The son attended his father as his camillus or acolyte, and so learned from him the traditional rituals and legends.

The Roman girl, like her brother, received a practical education. She remained at home and was taught by her mother or some female relative, the principles of domestic art. Every girl learned to spin and weave for the family clothing was all made in the home.

Religion played an important part in the lives of the people of the early Republic. The children were accustomed from earliest youth to see offerings made at the family hearth each morning, to Vesta, the goddess of Fire, to the Penates, protectors of the store-chamber, and to the Lares, tutelary spirits of the family estate. Aside from these daily religious ceremonies to the gods, there were certain feast days set aside for the worship of the gods. The Roman feared the gods, and so sought by traditional rites to win their favor. The old Roman had a conscience and believed that whether he did right or wrong was a matter of concern to the gods. Not until Rome came under Greek influence, did the people give human form to their gods or build temples to them.

Every boy was given a certain amount of physical training so that he might be strong enough to endure the hardships of military life when the state needed him. Physical exercise consisted in riding, run-

ing, leaping, boxing, and swimming.

There was little progress during this period. A boy grew up to be a farmer, soldier, or statesman, depending largely on what his father had been. He followed the customs and traditions of the family, and it was considered the severest criticism of a man to say he had acted as his fathers would not have done. The boy was fitted for service to the state, and only at the sacrifice of individual culture.

It is impossible to fix any definite date for the beginning of Greek influence on Roman education. Certain it is, that by the close of the First Punic War in the third century, B. C., the Romans were becoming acquainted with Greek. Commercial and diplomatic intercourse made Greek almost a necessity. So we find in 282, B. C., Lucius Postumius, Roman envoy to Tarentum, addressing his audience in Greek. Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus, the earliest Roman historians wrote in Greek, which shows that they not only understood the language, but that their countrymen must have also.

The importation of Greek slaves undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on the Hellenizing of Roman education. Many of these slaves were from the best Greek families, and consequently were well educated. These slaves were employed by the Roman to teach his children to write and speak Greek. At first the study of Greek was undertaken merely for practical purposes, to aid in commercial or diplomatic relations, but gradually the language was studied for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of Greek literature. This step was of the utmost importance to education, for thus the Romans were the first to base their culture on a

foreign literature. This practice has endured down to present time, and now the Roman language is to us, what Greek was to them.

To Livius Andronicus, the Romans owed the first translation of Homer's *Odyssey* into Latin. Livius had been a slave, and as such, served as a teacher to his master's children and the children of other Roman nobles. After he was set free, he continued to teach, but also spent his time translating the great Greek writers. Besides the *Odyssey* he translated several Greek plays, which were enacted on the stage, but the chief importance of these translations was their use as text books in the school.

During this second period we have the first mention of elementary schools being established. These schools were usually opened by an ambitious slave or freedman. They received presents at the yearly festival and later on it became customary to pay a stipulated fee. The school was open to anyone who could pay this fee.

The early elementary school was small, simply a room with rough benches. In some of the better class schools, busts of famous men and national heroes were found.

The school day was long. The children often came to school with lanterns and studied by these until it grew light. There was no fixed period of vacation, but there were numerous festival days on which there was no school. The children of the wealthy and noble class often went to the country in the summer, so it is doubtful whether the schools were open at this time or not.

Since the state took no part in education there was no definite attempt at uniformity among the schools. However, since the range of subjects was narrow, and since most of the teachers were Greeks,

who had been trained according to Greek ideals, a certain similarity existed after all. The children were taught much as they were formerly taught in the home, to read, write, and compute sums. The Twelve Tables of laws were taught, and a translation of the Odyssey was the only text book.

To the elementary school was soon added a grammar school. The education in this school followed that of the elementary school and was more or less secondary. It included the study of Homer, mythology, history, ethics, and the epic poems. Poetry was studied and many boys wrote verse.

The principles and methods of Greek rhetoric were studied by an exclusive few, usually with a view to the training it gave in oratory. Though rhetoric was not a part of the curriculum of the grammar school, it was sometimes taught there by teachers who were anxious to give the pupils all the knowledge they could, and because there was bound to be a certain "over-lapping" between this school and the higher schools of rhetoric.

Probably one of the strongest evidences of Greek influence was the introduction of philosophy, with its bold questionings and its guides to moral conduct. At first it was viewed with suspicion and hostility, but gradually thoughtful men began to study it, because it proved a better guide to moral conduct than their old formal religion had been. Philosophy was not, however, during this period, a part of the school curriculum, but it was an important influence on Roman education.

Physical exercise in its more strenuous forms, and dancing, met with a great deal of opposition at Rome. The Romans thought that only such exercise as was necessary to keep fit for service was worth

while. To the serious mind of the Roman it seemed unworthy to attach as much significance to sports as the Greeks did, while the scanty attire of the Greeks shocked the Roman sense of modesty. Seneca thought the time spent in physical exercise might be more profitably spent in the study of literature and philosophy. Dancing was also opposed as being too light and frivolous, but nevertheless it proved popular and many boys and girls were taught to dance.

Music, although frequently used at religious festivals was not an integral part of Roman education. The music girls and flute players mentioned in literature were mostly professional and foreigners.

While education is developing at Rome and meeting the needs of the better classes, it is not without its less attractive side--the development of education widened the breach between social classes. In the early Republic, everyone received about the same education, but now the wealthy and those of the higher classes can receive a much better education, while the poor, not being encouraged or forced by the state to educate their children, in many cases receive no education at all.

The decline of religion and the growing importance of philosophy was viewed with suspicion by the masses, who had not been taught and were consequently incapable of understanding the intricate reasoning of philosophy. Even learned men, such as Cato, bitterly opposed the influx of Greek philosophy and culture, and sought through decrees of the Senate, to exclude Greek philosophers.

In the third period, the Graeco-Roman period, education has assumed a definite form, the cumulative result of the austere life and education of the early Republic and the aesthetic cultural influence of

Greece. It will be well, therefore, to review the general result as manifest in the system of education from the first century, B. C., to the end of the ^{second} first century, A. D.

A national form of education as it existed in Greece was never popular at Rome. Roman education was for the higher classes who could use it for political purposes or for their own amusement; it had little appeal to the plebian classes.

The absolute power of the father over his child, the power to say whether the child shall be raised and educated or whether it shall be exposed to die or left to the mercy of some kind stranger, exerted its influence. The father knew that he could educate his child or not, according as he saw his duty without any interference from the state.

If the father decided to rear and educate the child a sacrifice was made either in the temple or at home on the eighth day for girls, the ninth day for boys, and the child was solemnly purified and named. In the better families a nutrice or nurse was chosen with care, to look after the early training of the child. Often this nurse was a Greek, and the child was carefully taught to speak Greek. At an early age the boys were placed in charge of slave tutors called pedagogi, whose chief duties were to look after the morals and manners of their charges and guide them to and from school.

Probably the best authority we have on the education of this period, at least the ideal of education, is Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, born in 35, A. D., at Calagurris. His father was a rhetorician, and recognizing the advantage of the capitol, sent his son there to complete his education. Quintilianus returned to his native land at the completion of his education, but was recalled to Rome in 68, A. D., by Galba,

governor of Hispania Tarracensis. He was successful as a teacher there and was the first rhetorician to set up a genuine public school and to receive a salary from the state. He continued to teach for twenty years, and had among his pupils, the Younger Pliny and the two sons of Domitilla, the sister of Domitian. His greatest contribution to education is his "Institutio Oratoria", the purpose of which, according to the author was "non inutiles fore libri videbantur quae ab ipsis dicendi velut incunabulis, per omnis, quae modo aliquid oratori future conferant, artis ad summam eius operis producere destinabamus".-----
 "It has been my design to lead my reader from the very cradle of speech through all the stages of education which can be of any service to our budding orator, till we have reached the very summit of the art". 1.

In the first book of the "Institutio Oratoria", Quintilian discusses elementary education. He stresses the importance of choosing a nurse for the young child who can speak correctly and is of good moral character. In the selection of the pedagogi, he would have equal care exercised. He shrewdly remarks, "I would urge that they should have had a thorough education, or if they have not, that they should be aware of the fact". 2.

Elementary instruction was often given in the home, in those families where they could afford to have an educated slave or litterator. According to Quintilian there were those who objected to public instruction on the grounds that it led to corruption of morals through bad associations, and that the teacher could not give as much to individual pupils as the private litterator could. Quintilian himself, seems to have favored public education, maintaining that the best teachers are in the public institutions; much instruction is just as easily given to

1. Book 1, Lines 6 and 7.

2. Book 1, Lines 1 to 8.

many pupils as to a few; the child acquires social understanding through intercourse at school, and the school provides the proper incentives and stimuli.

The child's literary training usually began at about the age of seven when he was sent to an elementary school, or given private instruction along the same lines as those pursued in the school. Reading and writing were the first subjects to be taught. The syllabic method of learning to read was used at Rome. As soon as the child had learned to trace the letter of the alphabet he was given "dictata magistri", which correspond to our copy book maxims, to copy. In this period, text books were used, the poets were read with emphasis on clear, correct pronunciation. ⁽¹⁾ Arithmetic under the Roman system was complicated, and was probably carried on from the elementary to the secondary school.

The second class of schools which the child attended was the School of Literature, or as it was more commonly called, the Grammar School, getting its name from the instructor who was called "Grammaticus". There were two Grammar Schools, the Greek Grammar School and the Latin Grammar School. Quintilian would have the youth attend the Greek school first. "A sermone Graeco puerum incipere malo, quia Latinum, qui pluribus in usu est, vel nobis nolentibus perbibet, simul quia discipulini quoque Graecis prius instituendus est, unde et nostrae fluxerunt". But he would have the youth also attend the Latin Grammar School shortly after beginning the Greek that he may not fall into bad habits of pronunciation and foreign idiom and that the two languages may proceed together, the one helping the other.

The study of famous authors comprised an important part of the work of the Grammar School. In the reading of an author, such as Homer, many questions on other subjects were brought up and explained, including

questions on ancient history, religion, mythology, geography, and manners and customs of the people. While Homer held the principal place in Greek Grammar Schools, Vergil held the same distinction in the Latin Grammar School. But these men were not exclusively studied. The selection of other authors depended largely on the choice of ^{the} getting teachers. Aesop's Fables might be read, or Hesiod, Menander, the Annals of Ennius, and parts of Plautus, Terence, and other popular authors. (1)

Formal grammar was by far the most important subject taught in the Grammar Schools. The study of grammar Quintilian divided into two parts: "recte loquendi scientia", and "poetarum enarratio". The "recte loquendi scientia" was further subdivided into the study of phonetics, the study of inflection of verbs and nouns and the study of diction. This part of the study of grammar was more or less technical; it required careful explanation, and then a process of memorization on the part of the pupil.

The second phase of formal grammar was "poetarum enarratio", or interpretation of poetry. This required a knowledge of metre. The Greek metre was regulated by quantity, and this metre was adapted by the Roman writers, not without exceptions, to be sure, and the rules governing these exceptions were studied. The pupil studied the hexameter and the trimeter iambic. The Interpretation of Poetry further involved an explanation of the text. This was very important, for the meaning and eloquence a pupil put into his reading of a poem depended on his understanding of the context. In all cases the reading of the pupil was preceded by an interpretation by the teacher.

Sometimes the teacher told the pupils a story. The children then reproduced this story in writing, as clearly and correctly as possible. Then the pupil might attempt to write the story in his own words and to condense or embellish it. The pupil might also write stories of an original nature, but the chief emphasis seems to have been on correctness of style. It was not uncommon for school children to write verse. Vergil wrote his "Culex" at sixteen and we have a monument erected to Q. Sulpicius Maximus, who died when he was twelve, and had already won the prize for Greek verse at the Capitoline games in 94, A. D.

Much of the school work consisted of lectures delivered by the teacher and taken down by the pupils.

Although the chief study of the Grammar School was literature, other studies were taught. Quintilian emphasizes especially the importance of certain other studies which should be taught before entering the School of Rhetoric.

He would have the pupil study music for expression; geometry for formal discipline; acting, especially comic acting, for correct pronunciation, tones, and emotions; and gymnastics to develop poise. Quintilian believed that only the most careful training would develop a successful orator, and he thought time well spent on those arts whose purpose was emotional expression. In regard to physical exercise or gymnastics he says: "Mutatione recreabitur sicut in cibis quorum diversitate reficitur stomachus et pluribus minore fastidio alitur".

And now we come to a consideration of the third class of schools developed at Rome, namely the Schools of Rhetoric. This type of school was one of the last to arise probably because of its very

specialized training, which was to make a man a "finished" orator. The need of this school was not felt as strongly as the need of a Grammar School, and indeed many men took part in public life and delivered orations and speeches without any further training than that afforded by the Grammar School. In the early days of Roman education rhetoric was taught by the "Grammatici", and this practice continued even after the establishment of Schools of Rhetoric; so much so, that Quintilian complains that boys are kept in the Grammar School after they are fitted for the Rhetorical School, and that the teachers of rhetoric are neglecting their duty and the Grammatici usurping the work of others.

The Schools of Rhetoric arose to meet the need of those who demanded a more complete training in oratory. It was therefore selective and specialized. The training usually began with exercises in writing to improve one's style. These exercises were based more on history, in comparison with those of the Grammar School which were based on fables and simple stories. Discussions on panegyric and invective followed. "Commonplaces", i.e., general reflections on vices are of immediate service in legal cases; and even more so are these 'theses', i.e., abstract questions involving a comparison, such as 'is country life to be preferred to life in a town'. There are other 'theses' of a deliberative kind, e.g., 'should a man marry?'. 1.

Much practice was given in declamation. Declamation was commonly divided into the 'suasoria' in which some course of action was discussed, and the 'controversia', in which some proposition was maintained or denied. The laws of the land were also discussed and advocated or criticized.

The practice of these schools of rhetoric was not without its faults. Declamation was sometimes artificial and superficial topics were often the subject for long speeches, showing great skill in the use of

brilliant phrases and novel expressions, but of little real value otherwise. There seems to have been a protest against making oratory the goal of literary education, some at least wanted intellectual culture for its own sake.

Probably one of the most interesting studies which the well-educated young Roman pursued was that of Philosophy. Philosophical training might be obtained in several ways. In some wealthy families, professors of Philosophy became residents. They taught the children when they were old enough, and discussed with the older members of the household, the tenants of their Philosophy. Sometimes Philosophy was taught in the Schools of Rhetoric, sometimes a philosopher might set up an informal school as Seneca did among his young friends to whom he acted as 'director'. Those who could afford it often completed their training abroad, particularly at Athens. The four great Schools of Philosophy were the Academic, the Peripatetic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.

Universities were established gradually both at Rome and abroad. Many of these Universities were connected with large libraries and here distinguished rhetoricians were to be found. The University afforded more advanced courses to those who had completed the School of Rhetoric. Oratory, mathematics, science, law, philosophy, and later, the seven liberal arts, were part of the curriculum of the University.

①
②

Although for a long time there was no such thing as a system of schools, and the government took little part in their oversight or

⑧

or establishment, still it did contribute to the support of the schools, and there was a certain uniformity among the schools. Caesar laid the beginnings of a state system of education when he gave the franchise to all doctors who were living at Rome as should settle there, and also to all teachers of liberal arts.

Vespasian was the first emperor to pay the salaries of the grammarians and rhetoricians from the imperial treasury. It was at this time that the University of Rome developed.

Antonius Pius encouraged and systematized education, by granting to grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers many of the privileges of the senatorial class. The number who might attain these privileges was necessarily limited.

Constantine, Julian, and Gratian further systematized education by fixing salaries, giving privileges to teachers, and appointing them. As a result of the privileges granted to teachers, many schools were established. Thus we see how the rank of the teacher had been exalted from that of a slave in early times to that of high rank under the Empire.

In 425, A. D., Theodosius and Valentian, to prevent certain abuses, arising from special privileges, decreed that the government had the sole authority to establish schools and that a penalty would be laid upon anyone assuming this prerogative. So we see here the foundation of the first system of public education.

With the decline and decay of the Roman Empire, came the decline of education. Education during the later part of the Empire was formal and superficial in character. The old ideal of training for the state had been lost, and even education to obtain oratorical skill had lost its appeal since the emperor dominated government and law.