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9) Martial was born between 38 and 41; see L. Friedlaender, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Libri* (Leipzig, 1886) Introduction, 3. These dates are deduced from a reference in X 24, written some time between 95 and 98, to Martial's fifty-seventh birthday.

10) Martial doesn't normally use *delicatus* with reference to people, and only does so on four occasions. At III 58.32 it is used to describe a eunuch, so probably means 'effeminate'; addressing the *lector* at IV 55.27 it means 'fastidious', also the meaning in the preface to Book XII. So with reference to Sparsus it ought to imply discrimination and love of ease, with only a hint, if any at effeminacy. Other occurrences of *delicatus* in Martial are I 49; I 104; III 2; III 20; III 82; IV 64; V 37; VII 17; IX 11; X 30; X 62; X 74; X 92.

11) Cf. X 20 (19) for Pliny and X 48 and 58 for Frontinus.

12) See X 13 and 92.

13) Martial never says when he actually left, only mentioning in the preface to Book XII a three-year gap since his last book.

14) I would like to thank Professor Gordon Williams and Dr Peter Toohey for reading drafts of this article. However, responsibility for all opinions expressed rests with me.

A SCHOOLBOY'S BURLESQUE FROM CYRENE?

The methods of the ancient schools are not much esteemed today. Rigid discipline, rote learning, and a seemingly callous disregard for the 'psychology' of their young charges, all receive generous notice in modern accounts¹). Among the better known drills was the grammarian's catechism, designed to insure that the student had memorized the pertinent facts of his Homer. "Who was the father of Hector?" the teacher would ask; "Priam," the student was expected to answer. "Who were his brothers?" "Alexander and Deiphobus"²). And so it went, an elementary version of the more recherché ζητήματα and λύσεις that built up around the classical texts and tried the expertise of the γραμματικοί themselves³).

This hunt for questions and answers of course struck some of the ancients as absurd, the material for satire or a crude joke: Juvenal's picture (7.233-36) of the grammarian, stopped in the street to answer various foolish questions, is notorious, as are Suetonius' remarks on the grammarians victimized by Tiberius (*Tib.* 70); on a different level, there is one of the jokes from the *Philogelos*: "The simple-minded grammarian, when stumped by the question, "What was the mother of Priam called?", answered: "Out of respect, we call her 'Lady'⁴)." In such places the teacher himself is the focus, whether as the object of Juvenal's 'sympathy' or as the butt. There may be an indication, however, that schoolboys too could laugh at the tests to which they were put.

The evidence is a bit of graffito from Cyrene which (to the best of my knowledge) has not yet received the notice it deserves⁵):

ζήτημα· τῶν Πριάμου παίδων τίς πατήρ;
 (“Question: who was the father of Priam’s children?”)

Scrawled on the wall, the macaronic riddle is evidently a parody of the litany, τίς ἦν ὁ τοῦ Ἑκτορος πατήρ; ...: a scholastic origin is demonstrated not only by the form and content of the question itself, but by the introductory ζήτημα..., which places it in the tradition of academic ζητήματα and λύσεις. There is, of course, no way of proving that it was the work of a schoolboy’s hand. It does, however, bear a remarkable resemblance to the farcical questions that American schoolchildren ask (or, at least, used to ask) each other, when bored by the minutiae of their lessons and in the mood to parody their teachers: “Who is buried in Grant’s Tomb?”; or, “What was the color of George Washington’s white horse?” That the graffito was found in Cyrene—home of Callimachus, regarded by some as both ancestor and victim of the stereotypically pedantic γραμματικός⁶)—might in itself be regarded as a crude joke of Chance: but I leave that for others to decide.

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1) E.g. H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l’éducation dans l’antiquité*⁶ (Paris 1965), 240 f., 397 f.

2) Epictet. *Diss.* II 19, 6-7, cf. *PSI* I 19, J. Schwartz, *Un manuel scolaire de l’époque byzantine*, Ét. pap. 7 (1949), 104, with Marrou, (op. cit. n. 1) 254, S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1977), 238, and esp. J. Schwartz, *Quelques “Quaestiones homericae et vergilianaes” chez les écrivains latins*, in *Hommages à Léon Herrmann* Collection Latomus 44 (Brussels 1960), 698 ff.

3) On ζήτημα and λύσις, R. Pfeiffer, *A History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968), 69 ff.

4) *Philogelos* 197 ed. Thierfelder: ἀφύης γραμματικὸς ἐρωτηθεὶς, “ἡ μήτηρ Πριάμου τίς ἐκαλεῖτο;” ἀπορῶν ἔφη· “ἡμεῖς κατὰ τιμὴν κυρίαν αὐτὴν καλοῦμεν” (note that at least one of the compilers of this collection was himself a grammarian: inscr. cod. Paris. suppl. gr. 690 Φιλόγελως ἐκ τῶν Ἱεροκλέους καὶ Φιλαργίου γραμματικοῦ [so the report of Thierfelder: -κῶν in the earlier editions], cf. cod. Monac. gr. 551 Φιλόγελως ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Ἱεροκλέους καὶ Φιλαργίου γραμματικοῦ).

5) Published without comment by G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Supplemento epigraphico cirenaico*, ASAA n.s. 23-34 (1961-62), 324 no. 192 (=J. and L. Robert, *Bull. ép.* 1964, 573).

6) Cf. *Anth. Gr.* XI 321, 3-4 (Philippus) [γραμματικοῖ] Καλλιμάχου στρατιῶται, ὄν ὡς ὄπλον ἐκτανύσαντες, / οὐδ’ αὐτοῦ κείνου γλῶσσαν ἀποστρέφετε. Cf. XI 322, 4 (Antiphanes) πικροὶ καὶ ξηροὶ Καλλιμάχου πρόκυνες.