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## ***Education and Entertainment: Some Aspects of Life in New Testament Times***\*

**David R. Jackson**

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In a valuable study printed seven years ago (*Vox Evangelica* I, 1962), Mr. H. Carey Oakley examined several aspects of the Greek and Roman background to the New Testament. This present article not intended as an original or an exhaustive survey, is designed as a further selection of material to illustrate one or two additional aspects of the world in which Christianity grew up.

### **I. EDUCATION**

**a. Greco-Roman Education.** From the time of Alexander the Great, Greek colonists and a Greek ruling class had settled extensively over the eastern half of the Mediterranean world. With an understandable desire to preserve their national culture and character, they set up their own institutions and laid great stress upon education to train up their children in a Greek way of life. From such an attitude there developed almost a religion of culture, and the influence of Hellenism grew out of all proportion to the number of Greeks who inspired it. Greek schools were found throughout Asia Minor, Persia and Babylonia: it was Greek education which a man needed in order to prosper in Egypt. Schooling was a municipal concern, and the gymnasiarch, who supervised higher education, became eventually almost the most important official of a city, but the extent to which the schooling system was supported financially would of course depend upon the wealth of each particular city. Hellenistic education consisted of a course of studies beginning when the pupil was seven and continuing until he was twenty. During the last stage of his course, a youth would undergo civic and military training (the *ephebia*) and at the same time would pursue higher studies in one of a number of rival subjects, such as rhetoric, philosophy or medicine.<sup>1</sup>

There was no strictly original Roman education to be found in our period, just as there was, in effect, no original Roman culture, but only a Romanized Hellenism the Romans simply took over the Hellenistic system, adapted it slightly to Roman circumstances, and established it through their western dominions. Greco-Roman education was, therefore, widespread and long-lived: it continued in the eastern half of the empire for centuries without a break; it had been fully accepted at Rome itself by the second century B.C., and it was established as far north as Britain by the end of the first century A.D.

The main purpose of this system of training was to produce men who were skilled orators, for the ability to speak effectively in public was regarded as an essential attribute of a free citizen in a civilized society. The various stages of education were therefore subservient to this rhetorical ideal, and the rhetorical programme was deeply entrenched in the schools of the Roman empire. There were three successive stages through which a pupil would normally pass: first, primary

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<sup>1</sup> *HEA* 99-104, 144; Plato *Leg.* 1. 644b; Menander *Monost.* 275; *HC* 95; *SEH* 139.

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school, under the elementary teacher (*literator*), from the age of seven to eleven; then secondary education, under the grammarian (*grammaticus*), between the ages of twelve and fifteen; and, finally, advanced study with the rhetorician (*rhetor*), until the student was about twenty years old.<sup>2</sup>

**(i) Primary Education.** Plato had wanted children to start school at the age of six; Aristotle had gone further and recommended five, while Chrysippus and Quintilian, more idealistic still, suggested the age of three, and it is significant that Quintilian's son had studied both Greek and Latin literature before he died at the age of ten. Most people, however, ignored these advanced opinions, and seven remained the normal age for beginning school. Until that time the child was brought up by his mother, with the help of a female slave in the more wealthy families. The well-to-do often preferred their children to receive elementary education from a private tutor at home, but most boys and girls would attend the primary school together.<sup>3</sup> But whether the child was taught in the home or outside, the family was expected to play a large part in the early formative training: Quintilian gives detailed instructions for parents to follow (they should not, for example, employ an ungrammatical nurse), while Horace and Juvenal refer to the enormous influence upon children of the example in the home, and complain about the frequent failures of parents to fulfil their responsibilities. If the family were not too poor, a boy would have, in addition to his parents' training, the supervision of a *paedagogus*, who was usually a slave or former slave of the household. The duty of this servant was not usually to teach school-subjects, but he would escort the child to the school and bring him home again after the six hours of lessons each day: he would hold a lantern to light the way in the early morning, and would carry his young master's equipment and sometimes even the boy himself if he were tired. The *paedagogus* would also watch over the moral welfare of the child, would help to mould his character and train him in good manners, would occasionally administer corporal punishment, and would sometimes indeed exercise such constant vigilance that the older child would resent him as a tyrant. Here we can see something of the background to Paul's statements in Gal. 3. 23ff., where we read that 'the Law was our custodian (*paidagogos*) until Christ came'. The poorer children, freer and happier, would go to school by themselves, carrying their tablets and writing-case slung over their arm, and taking the teacher's fee once a month.<sup>4</sup>

The elementary school was often neglected by the municipality and usually escaped official control: it was customarily no more than a shop near the business-centre of a city, and, having entered, the pupil would find himself in a simple room containing an armchair for the teacher and backless wooden stools for the children: there would be no desks, for the stiff writing tablets would be held on the knees. Lessons in summer began at dawn, and in winter before daylight, the room being illuminated by a smoky oil-lamp. The teaching was evidently not appreciated by the neighbours, to judge from the poet Martial's complaints:

'What right have you to disturb us, abominable schoolmaster,  
object abhorred alike by boys and girls?

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<sup>2</sup> *HEA* 96, 265; *OR* 56, 65f, 96, 172, 179, etc.; *RGRE* 59; *RECQ* 40; Juvenal 15. 110ff; *RGRE* 3, 25, 60f; Quintilian 1. 1. 15-18; Juv. 14. 10; Suetonius *Nero* 7; cf. Codex Theodosianus 14. 9. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *HEA* 142f; Plato *Leg.* 1. 643bc; Aristotle *Pol.* 7. 1336a 23f, b 35ff; Quint. 1. 1. 16; 6. *pr.* 9ff; *HEA* 266; *DL* 54; Martial 9. 68. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *HEA* 147; Quint. 1. 1. 1-20; Horace *Sat.* 1. 4. 103-129; Juv. 14. 1-106; Quint. 1. 1. 8; *HEA* 143f; *LRW* 322f, 326; Plautus *Bacch.* 422f; Terence *Andr.* 1. 24f; Hor. *Sat.* 1. 6. 74f.

Before the crested cocks have broken silence you begin  
to roar out your savage scoldings and blows! (Epigr. 9. 68.)

The instruction was primarily in reading and writing: if arithmetic were taught, it would be only to the most elementary standard. No qualification was required

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for teachers, but city officials would sometimes try to obtain men of character for the work.<sup>5</sup>

Plato had recommended that children's games should be utilized to help in teaching, and Quintilian also favoured, for younger children, the method of learning through play and competition, suggesting, for example, that a youngster should be given an ivory alphabet to play with, and that prizes should be offered for correct answers. The majority of schoolmasters, however, did not employ such a psychological approach: education was not child-centred, but the pupils were normally expected to be passive, and the most highly valued qualities were a good memory and powers of imitation. Children who were learning to form their letters first had their fingers guided by the teacher, and later had to follow exactly the pattern of letters traced or carved upon their tablets. It is this process which Peter calls to mind when he tells us that Christ has left us 'an example' (a 'writing-pattern', *hypogrammon*) for us to follow in our living (I Pet. 2. 21).

Once the child could recognize the letters he would progress to simple exercises alphabetical acrostics, for example, have been found in Egypt, together with alphabetical lists of names and alphabetical strings of sentences telling simple stories. After such an initial training the pupil would learn to read and to recite selected passages from the classical poets, passages which remained unchanged in the school anthologies through many centuries.<sup>6</sup>

**(ii) Secondary Education.** Most children finished their education at the primary level and only a favoured few went on to secondary school at the age of eleven or twelve. Such schools were therefore rather less numerous and parents often had to send their sons into lodgings in nearby cities. Many aspects of school-life would be the same as before: the school-room itself, slightly more stylish, with busts and maps around the walls, would still be only a shop near the town-centre, separated from the street by an awning: it would still be under the charge of one master and his assistant: daily and termly times of study would still be the same, with summer holidays from July to October and the academic year beginning in the autumn.<sup>7</sup>

The studies were, of course, now more complex. Several writers, including Cicero and Quintilian, plead for an all-round education incorporating all the liberal arts: such subjects as music, astronomy, philosophy, geometry and arithmetic, in addition to the study of literature, while Vitruvius desires a would-be student of architecture to have received instruction in drawing, optics, history, medicine and law, besides the subjects previously mentioned. For Quintilian, as for most other cultivated men of the time, a wide education was desirable only

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<sup>5</sup> HEA 113, 145, 267; Plato *Prot.* 315c, 325e; Demosthenes *Cor.* 258 (313); Ovid *A.A.* 1. 13. 17; *Mart.* 9. 68; 12. 57. 5; 14. 223; *Juv.* 7. 222ff; HEA 147, 271; HC 95.

<sup>6</sup> Plato *Leg.* 7. 793e; 7. 819bc; *Quint.* 1. 1. 20, 26; 1. 2. 23ff; 1.3.8-13; *Seneca Ep.* 94. 51; *Quint.* 1. 1. 27; 1. 3. 1; *DL* 57; HEA 153f.

<sup>7</sup> HC 96; HEA 274; LRW 322; *Hor. Sat.* 1. 6. 65-88; *Juv.* 7. 226f; *Mart.* 10. 62.

in so far as it helped to produce the ultimate ideal, an effective orator. Music, for example, was to teach the orator voice-modulation and harmonious gesture: mathematics was to increase his mental agility and to ensure that, in his speeches, his calculations were correct—which is, of course, an ability that might be appreciated by certain more modern politicians also. In practice, however, the course of study was much more restricted. Some schools of the eastern Mediterranean maintained a traditional Greek emphasis on music and gymnastics, but although such accomplishments could be learned, they were generally neglected in the school-syllabus of the first century A.D., which had become characterized by an almost exclusively literary flavour. Astronomy was studied, not for any scientific purpose, but in order to understand the references in classical literature. The standard of mathema-

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tics was such that the pupil might be moderately proficient at mental arithmetic and reasonably sure of not being cheated of his possessions. The few who studied such subjects in detail were those who intended to become specialist performers or technicians.<sup>8</sup>

Generally speaking, then, secondary school education was given by the grammarian (*grammaticus*) only, and was overwhelmingly a study of literature. The aim was to inculcate not only good speech, but also robust qualities of character, through a study both of the style and of the content of classical authors. Within the field of literature poetry received much more attention than prose. The main Greek writers studied were Homer and the fifth century B.C. dramatists, although Egyptian papyri show that a remarkably wide selection of Greek literature was known at secondary school level. Among the Latin authors most attention was given to Virgil, Horace and Terence, together with contemporary poets who achieved prominence, such as Lucan and Statius, while sometimes, as prose-writers, Cicero and Sallust were read. Education was often bilingual, and a western pupil was well-advised to begin with Greek literature, since he would naturally become familiar with Latin works.<sup>9</sup> The basic method of the *grammaticus* was the explanatory lecture: the master would read a passage aloud and would then analyse it in the greatest detail, often with a display of pedantic erudition, explaining all the hard words, idioms, references to mythology and history, points of grammar, syntax, rhythm and figures of speech, together with any moral lessons to be learnt. The students then took turns in reading aloud the same passage and were closely questioned by the teacher about the points which he had previously explained. Along with reading went recitation, to train the memory, and the practice of numerous exercises to familiarize a boy with correct spelling, grammar, punctuation and usage, the employment of synonyms and figures of speech, and the rules of prosody. Towards the end of their time in secondary school the pupils might also begin to do some advanced exercises in preparation for the next stage of education, for the line of demarcation between the grammarian and the rhetorician had become rather blurred.<sup>10</sup>

It will already be apparent how repetitive, mechanical and imitative was much Greco-Roman education. Brilliant teachers doubtless existed, but there must also have been much stultifying

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<sup>8</sup> Cicero *de Orat.* 1. 8-12, 187; 2. 162; 3. 127; Quint. 1. 4. 4; 1. 10. 1-49; 1. 12. 1-7; *Vitruvius* 1. 1. 3; Sen. *Ep.* 88. 1-20; Galen *Protr.* 14. 39; *RECQ* 84f, 147; Quint. 1. 10. 22-49; cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.30; *HEA* 130,141; *SBHE* 386; *RECQ* 153; *LRW* 328; *WR* 75f; *HEA* 282; Hor. *A.P.* 323-333; *LRW* 324; *HEA* 183f, 271, 281f.

<sup>9</sup> *HEA* 163ff, 275ff; *RECQ* 153ff, 199; Sen. *Ep.* 88. 3; Hor. *Ep.* 2. 1. 126-138; *DL* 58; Tacitus *Dial.* 12, 20; Juv. 7. 225f; Mart. 5. 56; Statius *Theb.* 12. 815; Quint, 1. 1. 12-14; 1. 4. 1; 1. 8. 4ff; 2. 5. 2; 10.1. 86.

<sup>10</sup> *RGRE* 63; *HEA* 279ff; Quint. 1. 8. *passim.*; 1. 1. 36; 1. 11. 14; 11. 2. 41; Juv. 7. 232-236; *RGRE* 21, 63; *RRS* 62; *HEA* 160, 282; Quint. 1. 9. 1-6; 2. 1. 1-4, 13; 2. 4. 1-40.

and unintelligent parroting of material. Horace, in later life, seems to us to adopt a remarkably generous attitude when he writes:

When I was little, Orbilius, my master, dictated to me the poems of Livius; he was fond of flogging me, but I am not dead set against those poems, nor do I think they ought to be destroyed' (*Ep.* 2.1.69ff.).

As the words of Horace suggest, despite the advocacy of playful competitions and the condemnation of corporal punishment by such humanitarians as Quintilian, a normal schoolmaster stimulated and maintained his pupils' attention by violent physical means. Whenever men thought back to their schooldays they remembered the beatings, and, centuries later, Augustine was to exclaim, at the age of seventy-two:

'Who is there who would not recoil in horror and choose death, if he were asked to choose between dying and going back to his childhood?' (*de Civ. Dei* 21. 14).<sup>11</sup>

**(iii) *The Rhetorical School.*** Most boys who were able to continue their education after the age of fifteen would go to the rhetorical school. Teachers of rhetoric

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flourished in the first century A.D. and their lecture-halls could be found all over the empire: such halls were of course more elaborate than the school-rooms previously mentioned, and, in the eastern empire, where physical education was still important and where the ephebic system and the gymnasium were at the centre of cultural life, the lecture-hall was often at the centre of the gymnasium. In the latter part of the century lecture-theatres were sometimes provided for rhetoricians by the state. Under the Roman empire oratory had lost, to some extent, its *raison d'être*, for with individual initiative and freedom of action restricted by imperial control, the orator could no longer have much influence upon the course of events. Nevertheless, oratory represented still the crowning accomplishment of every educated man. But by 'oratory' we are to understand more than we mean today by that term. In that era, with no mass-communications, no university bodies, no scientific organizations, the orator combined in himself the functions of teacher, publicist, religious instructor, advocate and administrator: he was, by the definition of Cato and Quintilian, 'the good man skilled in speaking' (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*): he was to be the educated, moral man engaged in public affairs, and oratory was to be his key to efficient public interest and activity.<sup>12</sup>

With such an important aim in view, one would expect an orator's education to be as wide as possible and to promote as much as possible of moral goodness, and we have seen that Cicero and Quintilian, among others, advocated a system of training which was intended to approach those requirements. In practice, however, as in the secondary school, although the youths would meet moral teaching in the course of their reading, yet the instruction concentrated to a very great extent upon the mechanics of speech-making, and the pupils were expected to master a mass of detailed rules, the result of centuries of tradition. The ancients believed that all accomplishments (and even the virtues) could be taught, and so a student's function, as in

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<sup>11</sup> *SBHE* 393; *LRW* 329; *HEA* 272; Quint. 1. 1. 20; 1. 3. 14ff; Hor. *Sat.* 1. 25f; Mart. 10. 62. 8-10; 10. 68. 11f; 14. 80; Juv. 1. 15; 14. 18f; Suet. *Gram.* 9. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *SBHE* 392; *OR* 224, 237; cf. Acts 19. 9; *HEA* 128f, 285; *DL* 61; *HC* 96f; *SBHE* 421-426, 445-449; Quint. 12. 1. 1.

the previous stages of education, was to maintain a faithful and imitative observance of rigid regulations. The professor would therefore ground his pupils in the theory of rhetoric by making them memorize the precise definitions and elaborate classifications and sub-classifications inherent in his subject; he would employ the method of detailed explanatory lectures to analyse rhetorical models of the past for his hearers to learn by heart and imitate; and he would lead the students to apply the precepts and follow the models in their own public 'declamations' upon set themes. A student would be taught how to search out arguments and arrange his ideas; he would be familiarized with the possible means of persuasion; he would receive instruction about style, rhythm, structure, the varying functions of the different parts of an oration, and the multitude of techniques available to add impressiveness and appeal to his performance; and he would work through a carefully graded course of rhetorical exercises, culminating in public declamations before his fellow-students and their friends. Such declamations were extremely widespread and popular, and even emperors and their courtiers were known to attend them. Generally they consisted of fictitious legal cases (*controversiae*) or imaginary advice to be given to famous historical characters at specific points in their careers (*suasoriae*). The set themes often remained unchanged through the centuries, and great credit was obtained by the student who could discover an original method of approach which yet remained within the stereotyped conventions of ancient oratory. Rhetoricians tended to prefer paradoxical and bizarre themes, since they provided a harder test of ability. One ficti-

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tious law-case recorded by Seneca is as follows: 'A man's life is wrecked and his wife and three children are killed when his house catches fire. He therefore hangs himself. He is cut down and revived by a passer-by. He prosecutes his rescuer for injury.' As an example of a *suasoria*, also preserved by Seneca, we may take the following: 'Alexander the Great deliberates whether to enter Babylon after having been warned of danger by a soothsayer'. In displays of virtuosity, orators sometimes declaimed both in Latin and in Greek, or argued first on one side of a theme and then on the other.

Effective public speaking was not, however, the sole result of the educational system, for, once men were introduced to self-expression through a detailed study of literature, their rhetorical training had, in its turn, an enormous influence upon further literary production, an influence which may, for example, be studied in the work of writers like Horace, Tacitus and Seneca.<sup>13</sup>

**(iv) Education Abroad.** After finishing his course at a rhetorical school a young man might spend several months at a foreign centre of culture: citizens of the capital generally went to the east, while provincials often came to Rome. Athens was still the great centre of cosmopolitan education, with her ephebic system now combined with the four great philosophical schools descended from Plato, Aristotle, Antisthenes and Epicurus, and surrounded by a vast host of rhetoricians and private tutors. In the latter part of the first century, from the time of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), the educational life of Athens was supported by public finance, and was destined eventually to become a university. But Athens

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<sup>13</sup> S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation* (1949), 51-70; *RGRE* 64-228; *OR* 14-50, 232, 237; *SBHE* 393; *RECQ* 158-172, 200-205; *HEA* 285-289; *WR* 70; *HC* 281; Cic. *de Orat.* 1. 6, 13, 20, 48-73; 2. 5; *Brut.* 322; Quint. 1. *pr.* 13; 1. 4. 4; 1. 10. 1-49, *et passim*; Juv. 7. 150ff; Suet. *Gramm.* 1, 2; *Nero* 10; Sen. *Contr.* 5. 1; cf. 1. 6, 7; 2. 2; 10.3; Sen. *Suas.* 4 *et passim*; Persius 3. 45-47; Pliny *Ep.* 2.18. 1f; *RGRE* 142-149; *OR* 13; *RECQ* 164.

was not without competition from other eastern cities; Alexandria, for example, with her zoological and botanical gardens, her library of a million volumes and her magnificent facilities for research, had actually surpassed Athens for scientific studies, and the whole of Asia Minor was rich in cultural establishments, notable centres being found at Rhodes, Ephesus, Tarsus, Pergamus and Smyrna.

In spite of the four rival schools of philosophy at Athens, many students were attracted to that city because of the rhetorical instruction available there. Philosophy was regarded as a narrow, specialized study and came a very poor second to rhetoric. The philosopher had chosen for himself a type of life which was different from that of normal society: even in his outward appearance he was different—some of the more extreme philosophers dressed in outlandish garments, never cut their hair and never washed—and to enter upon a life of philosophy often required some form of 'conversion experience'.<sup>14</sup>

**(v) Technical Education.** Students wishing to follow specialized occupations would probably not attend a rhetorical school. Legal experts were required, for a professional orator would often be ignorant of the finer points of law: such experts would receive training under an established lawyer. Shorthand-writers would attend their own schools. Architects and engineers would have their separate instruction and apprenticeship: Alexandria had splendid facilities for training the surveyors and engineers required for the Egyptian irrigation system. Doctors, who were usually Greeks, would also serve long apprenticeships and would study at one of the famous medical schools in a place like Alexandria or Cos, Smyrna, Laodicea, Pergamus or Ephesus: vivisection, possibly even human vivisection, sometimes formed part of their training. Only the charlatans claimed to be able to train a doctor in six months, and they sometimes recruited carpenters, smiths

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and undertakers into the profession.<sup>15</sup> Cicero regarded architecture and medicine as very secondary professions, although admittedly superior to pastry-cooking and shopkeeping, and his view is typical of the general Roman attitude towards all manual activity: the technician was not regarded as a man of culture. Pliny, for example, can tolerate painting as a preliminary form of study, but says that no well-born Roman has been a painter for centuries. Such an attitude, combined with the existence of abundant slave-labour, goes far to explain why many scientific discoveries were not followed-up—why, for example, the use of steam-power, understood at Alexandria, was never developed. Economic factors may also have been important: Tiberius is said to have killed a man who invented unbreakable glass, because the discovery would have cheapened the imperially owned metals, and Vespasian refused an invention for transporting heavy loads, saying that he had to provide employment for the working-classes. At all events, scientific subjects were not taught in the normal school.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *SBHE* 393; *WR* 70; *HEA* 212f; *SBHE* 295-305; *DL* 53; *HEA* 213ff; *HC* 269f; *RECQ* 175ff; *HEA* 206; Suet. *Gramm.* 18; *Sen. Contr.* 2. pr. 1f; *Sen. Ep.* 108. 13-22.

<sup>15</sup> *HEA* 190f, 271, 289f; Vitruv. 1. 1. 1-11; *RECQ* 147, 149f; *RC* 302ff; *DL* 53; *HEA* 189, 192f; Galen *Met. med.* 1. 83; 10. 5, 19; *RC* 311-314; Pliny *N.H.* 29. 1 (8). 17-25; Juv. 10. 221; Mart. 1. 30, 47; 8. 74; Epictetus 3. 23, 27, 30; Celsus 1. pr. 23, 74f; cf. Galen *de Nat. fac.* 3. 4. 155ff; Tertullian *de Anim.* 10; and cf. *Cambridge Ancient History* 7. 286.

<sup>16</sup> *HEA* 194, 222; *RECQ* 148; Cic. *de Off.* 1. 42.150f; Pliny *N.H.* 35.10 (36).77; cf. Lucian *Somn.* 9; *RECQ* 150f; *WR* 75f; *HC* 295-309; M. R. Cohen and I. E. Drabkin, *A Source Book in Greek Science* (1948), 331ff; Dio Cassius 57. 21; Suet. *Vesp.* 18.



**(vi) *The Extent of Education.*** What of the education of women? Boys and girls were educated together in primary school, and in some parts of the eastern Mediterranean at secondary level also, but, more usually, if women were taught after the elementary stage, it was at home by a private tutor. There was no definite, formal place given to women in the educational system, although at least one writer argued for it, but throughout the Roman period there was a constant supply of educated and influential aristocratic women, and women of culture had great influence in the Hellenistic world: there were, for example, women magistrates, and women professors were found at the Athenian Academy. A good deal of emancipation could be gained by the woman who was prepared to grasp it, but comparatively few women wanted to grasp it, and sometimes, of course, there was masculine prejudice to be overcome.<sup>17</sup>

But the majority of men were not, educationally, in a very much better position: under the empire a system of schooling spread through the whole Roman world, and it was very gradually becoming more accessible to the masses; private benefactors sometimes donated schools and libraries to their home towns, and slaves in wealthy households could receive quite a good training, but, generally speaking, the Greco-Roman system made an extended education available to only a small minority, primarily to those who came from well-to-do families and who were destined to become leaders and administrators. Most people, indeed, were engaged in the 'sordid' occupations which Cicero despised, and most of them cared little for the schools of literature and rhetoric: one character in Petronius boasts that he has never learned 'geometry and literature and all the rest of that sort of nonsense', but can read the letters on an inscription, knows his weights and measures, and can add up any sum.<sup>18</sup>

**(vii) *The Status of Teachers.*** No professional training was required for teachers, and the men who took up the work were often slaves or freedmen, or those who had failed or been ruined in some other area of life. In consequence, the profession was often despised. 'Either he's dead or he's teaching somewhere' says one wit about a former acquaintance.<sup>19</sup> Of the twenty-five grammarians and rhetoricians described by Suetonius, thirteen had previously been slaves, and many died in misery and poverty, for although it was possible for a really exceptional teacher to make his fortune, especially if he enjoyed imperial patronage, yet such a man

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was 'rarer than a white crow' (Juv. 7. 190ff), for in general schoolmasters were extremely ill-paid. In order to receive an income comparable with that of a carpenter or stonemason, a primary teacher needed a class of at least thirty pupils: few classes were so large as that, and even if they were, the master would often have to plead for his fees, for parents were notoriously slow to pay. Grammarians and rhetoricians had a slightly higher social standing and more opportunity for escaping poverty, but they too could be heard bemoaning the meanness of their students' families.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *SBHE* 394; *HEA* 274; *DL* 54; *WR* 72; *HC* 95; *LRW* 327; cf. *NMA* 79; Mart. 9. 68. 2; Musonius 19; cf. Sen. *ad Helv.* 17; *ad Marc.* 16; Pliny *Ep.* 1. 16. 6; 3. 3; 4. 19. 2f; 5. 16. 3; Mart. 7. 69; *NMA* 80; *WR* 72; *HC* 99f.

<sup>18</sup> *RRS* 101ff; *HEA* 266, 294-297; *NMA* 131; *RC* 287; *SEH* 178f; Pliny *Ep.* 1. 8; 3. 3. 3; *RECQ* 149; Mart. 9. 73. 7f; Petronius *Sat.* 58.

<sup>19</sup> Zenobius 4. 17, in *Frag. Com. Graec.* (ed. A. Meineke) 4. 698. 375; *HEA* 146, 267f, 275; Sen. *Ep.* 88. 1; Suet. *Gramm.* 6. 10-13; 9. 1; 24. 1; *NMA* 92; Juv. 7. 197f; Pliny *Ep.* 4. 11. 1.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1. 6. 75; *SBHE* 418; Juv. 7. 157f, 187f; 10. 116; Ovid *Fast.* 3. 829; *HEA* 267, 274, 284; R. P. Robinson, "The Roman Schoolteacher and His Reward", *Classical Weekly* 15, no. 8 (1921), 57-61.

In many of the eastern cities where education had long been a municipal concern, teachers were paid from public funds and given certain tax-exemptions. Polybius, indeed, expressed surprise that the Roman state did not exercise a similar control over teaching, but, apart from the provision of a few libraries, the earlier emperors did nothing in this field and it was not until Vespasian, in the second half of the first century A.D., that the imperial treasury began to support higher education. Vespasian's successors gradually extended his work and sometimes endowed schools, for orphans, for example; and private individuals too, like Pliny, could organize and support similar endowments and scholarships in their home areas to ensure the presence of teachers there. In general terms we may say that, by the end of the period we are considering, the status of teaching began slowly to improve it could hardly have worsened.<sup>21</sup>

**(viii) Criticisms of Education.** Because of the absence of political liberty under the empire, oratory had lost its chief function, and the law-court was now the only place where rhetoric could be put to a safe practical use. But rhetorical ability was still regarded as the highest educational accomplishment. It did indeed teach men to arrange their thoughts in an orderly fashion, but it led them often into a classroom oratory remote from the real business of life, an oratory which was concerned with bizarre themes, which was artificial and extravagant, brilliant, brittle and bombastic, more highly regarded for its style than for its substance. 'We educate ourselves for the classroom and not for life' said Seneca, and we read of a famous rhetorician who was utterly unable to speak outside his lecture-hall, while Martial pours scorn on the orator who could offer eloquent speeches about Hannibal, but who was useless in a petty burglary case.<sup>22</sup> Quintilian tried to reverse the decline, by making education more related to life, but he failed, and the moral and intellectual weaknesses, well described by Tacitus and Juvenal, continued to grow. Most ancient critics, however, attacked only what they considered to be the extravagances of the system: hardly any attacked rhetoric itself as the basis of education. To us, perhaps, the most glaring weakness seems to be the basis itself, with the virtual exclusion of practical and scientific studies from the normal curriculum: Rome produced hardly one original scientific thinker.<sup>23</sup>

**b. Jewish Education.** Although without such great cultural effect as the Greeks, the Jews were also widely dispersed through the Roman empire. In Egypt, for example, lived one million Jews, forming one eighth of the total population, and the city of Alexandria was almost as much Jewish as Greek: Jewish communities were to be found throughout Syria and Asia Minor, in the cities of Greece, and in Rome itself. Even if the importance of education had not been so heavily stressed in the Scriptures, the Jews, like the Greeks, would have realized its enormous value for maintaining their own culture and religion in face of an alien environ-

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<sup>21</sup> Cic. *Rep.* 4. 13; *RRS* 102f; Suet. *Vesp.* 18; Pliny *Ep.* 1. 8; 4. 13; *SBHE* 411f; *LRW* 322; *HEA* 301-305; *RC* 287; *SEH* 139; *NMA* 148, 372; *HC* 95; T. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire* (1909) I. 362ff; *WR* 71.

<sup>22</sup> *SBHE* 421; Sen. *Ep.* 106.12; Sen. *Contr.* 1. *pr.* 13-24; 9. *pr.* 3; Quint. 10. 5. 18; *RECQ* 167ff; *RC* 287; *HC* 281; Mart. 6. 19.

<sup>23</sup> *SBHE* 394, 450; W. Peterson, *Quint. Inst. Orat. Liber Dec.* (1891), xvii; Tac. *Dial.* 28-35; Petron. *Sat.* 1-2; Quint. 2. 4. 42; 2. 10. 3ff; 2. 16. 12-19; 5. 12. 17-23; 6. *pr.* 3; 8. 3. 57f, 76; 12. 11. 30; *WR* 70, 73f; Pliny *N.H.* 14. 18 (22). 117f; R. P. Robinson, *art. cit.*, 58.

ment. We find, therefore, that under the empire elementary and advanced schools were organized and, together with the synagogue, were at the centre of a Jewish community. 'As long as the voice of Jacob is heard in the synagogues and in the schools', it was declared, 'the hands of Esau will not prevail' (*Pesikta* 121 a). The aim of Jewish education was a religious one: the knowledge and practice of the Torah ('law, direction, instruction'), the revealed will of God as contained in the Scriptures and elaborated in the traditional teachings of the scribes.<sup>24</sup>

**(i) Primary Education in the Home.** The Jewish family was a closely knit unit. Tacitus criticized the common failure of Roman parents to look after their children's welfare, and he thought it significant that, with the exception of the Teutonic tribes, only the Jews regarded it as a crime to kill their infants. An orthodox Jewish father was left in no doubt about his responsibility to teach his children: the recital of Deut. 6. 4-9 and 11. 13-21 in the daily liturgy would impress that fact upon him, together with many other Scriptures relating to the training of the young.<sup>25</sup> But the child would absorb many lessons from his home surroundings even without formal teaching from the parents: he would ask questions about the long tassels on his father's clothing, and about the *mezuzah* which was fastened to the doorpost and contained a small copy of the *Shema* (Dt. 6. 4-9; 11. 13-21); he would enquire about the phylacteries which his father wore on the arm and forehead at morning prayer, and about the striking and picturesque festivals kept by the family; and the answers to his questions would form the initial stage of his religious training. Indeed, it was especially required that at the Passover the youngest child present should rise and ask his father the meaning of the feast the father had then to recount, in the simplest language, the history of Israel from Abraham to Sinai. It is not surprising, therefore, that Philo and Josephus should declare that Jewish children were trained in the *Torah* almost from the cradle. But formal teaching by the parents was not to begin too early lest the child's health should suffer. About the age of five a child would be taught to read, and the method employed would be similar to that used for teaching letters in a Greco-Roman environment, while to acquire fluency the child would read aloud. The reading material would consist of short selected portions from the Scriptures and prayers, and there would be only a little learning by heart at this stage, but a father would ensure that his children were taught 'to behave according to the laws' and also 'to know the deeds of their ancestors, that they might imitate them' (Josephus, *c. Ap.* 2. 26).<sup>26</sup>

**(ii) Elementary Education in School.** At the age of six or seven a Jewish child would go to the elementary school, the *Beth ha-sepher* ('house of the book'), where he would read and learn the Scriptures. The school was usually connected with, and frequently met inside, the local synagogue, and often the teacher would be the *hazzan* (the 'attendant' of Luke 4. 20), although a higher-ranking *sopher* ('schoolmaster') would be appointed if possible. The teacher's salary was paid by the congregation, for he was not to accept fees from the pupils in

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<sup>24</sup> T. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, 2. 127, 163ff; *HEA* 316f; Josephus *c. Ap.* 1. 12; 2. 19; *Babylonian Baba Bathra* 21a; the Rabbinic sources contain undated material ranging from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D.: it is consequently difficult to form a picture of conditions in the first century A.D., and any attempt to do so must unfortunately involve some speculation: see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1962), 3f; *PP* 4; *SJSL* 127; *J* 311, 313f, 321; *HJP* 2. 1. 319; 2. 2. 44f; *EI* 13f; cf. C. Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (1877), 113-118.

<sup>25</sup> Tac. *Dial.* 28; *Hist.* 5. 5; Germ. 19; *SJSL* 111; *HEA* 317; *JE* 5. 42; Gen. 18. 19; Ex. 12. 26f; 13. 8, 14ff; Deut. 4. 9f; 6. 20f; 22. 7, 46; Psa. 78. 5f; Prov. 1. 8; 4. 1; 6. 20; 13. 1; 22. 6; 31. 7; Eccles. 30.1-13; *EI* 14f.

<sup>26</sup> Philo *Leg. ad Cai.* 16, 31; Jos. *c. Ap.* 1. 12; 2. 18-25; *Ant.* 4. 8. 12; *PP* 4ff; *EI* 19-23, 35ff; *SJSL* 96f, 105-111, 130; cf. II Tim. 3. 15; *Aboth* 5. 21; cf. *PTN* 83; *HJP* 2. 2. 50f; it should be noted that the complete age-scheme presented in *Aboth* 5. 21 (appendix) is later than our period.

case he should show favouritism to the rich: it was also required that he should be married, of good character and not easily irritated. For every twenty-five boys a schoolteacher was to be appointed: if the number in the class reached forty an assistant master was also required. Elementary schools were probably quite common in Palestine in the time of Christ, for although the historical development of Jewish

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state education is a little uncertain, Simeon ben-Shetach seems to have given an impetus to the schooling-system in the first century B.C., with especial reference to fatherless youths, while the high-priest Joshua ben-Gamala appears to have improved and standardized the system about A.D. 64 by appointing schoolmasters for every town in Palestine. A Jewish tradition states that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem before A.D. 70, each one with its elementary and advanced school attached: the number is exaggerated, but the schools of Jerusalem were, in all probability, numerous.<sup>27</sup>

The method followed in an elementary school was for the teacher to read a verse and for the children to repeat it until they knew it by heart: their memory was trained to become extremely retentive, and at an early age they would know the basic texts: the *Shema* (Dt. 6. 4-9; 11. 13-21; Num. 15. 37-41), the *Hallel* (Pss. 113-118), the creation-story (Gn. 1-5), and the ceremonial ordinances (Lv. 1-8): it was customary to begin with Leviticus. In the schools of the Dispersion the LXX version was employed, and so if Paul was brought up in Tarsus, he would probably have learned the Scriptures in Greek, but some scholars now hold that he was brought to Jerusalem as a child and received all his education there in Aramaic.

Religion, for the Jew, entered into every part of life, including agriculture and commerce, and so some astronomy and mathematics would be included in the syllabus and the Talmud declares that the Jews gained glory among the nations for their study of such subjects.<sup>28</sup>

**(iii) Advanced Education.** On every Sabbath in every synagogue the Law was read and expounded, and the scribes, in the tradition of Ezra, gave sermonic instruction to the congregations. This in itself was a form of adult-education, and the synagogues became known as 'places of instruction' (Philo, *de Vit. Moys*, 3. 27). Public teaching was also given in the Temple on Sabbaths and festival-days (cf. Luke 2: 46). But for continuous schooling after the age of thirteen, when he became a 'son of the commandment' (*bar mizwah*), a boy would go to the *beth ha-tnidrash*, the 'house of instruction', which was usually found beside the synagogue. Only a small fraction of the total population would undertake advanced education, which was intended to produce trained scribes, for the subjects studied were the traditions of the elders, the Halakhah (regulative legal guidance) and Haggadah (interpretative homiletical narration), which came to be regarded as having equal authority with the Scriptures and which

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<sup>27</sup> *JE* 3. 116f; 5. 43; *Bab. B. Bathra* 21 a; *EI* 35, 37; *SJSL* 105f, 133ff, 137; *SLJ* 48f; *PP* 7; *HJP* 2. 2. 48-50; *EI* 32ff; *J* 317f; *SJE* 594; *SJSL* 105f; N. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education* (1940), 60f; *Aboth* 2. 6; *Jerusalem Megillah* 3. 73d; *Pesikta* 14. 121b; *Jer. Ketuboth* 8. 32c; 13. 35c; the number 480, so far from being accurate, is apparently reached by gematria; ct. *Bab. Ket.* 105a; *PTN* 82f; B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (1961), 56-66.

<sup>28</sup> *SLJ* 50; *EI* 42; cf. *Aboth* 2. 8, 13f; *Jos. c.Ap.* 2. 19; *PP* 7; *J* 322; W. C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem* (Eng. tr. 1962), 52-58; G. Ogg, *The Chronology of the Life of Paul* (1968), 6; *JE* 5. 44; *Bab. Shabbath* 75a.

were eventually (ca. A.D. 200) codified in written form as the *Mishnah*<sup>29</sup>. Instruction may still have been given free, as in the elementary schools, or may possibly have been free only in the schools of the Hillelites. The students sat on the ground before their teacher (until chairs were provided in the late first century A.D.), and in their orderly arrangement they resembled rows of vines or flower-beds in a garden: indeed, perhaps because of that fact or because it was built in a certain shape, the advanced school was sometimes called 'the vineyard'.<sup>30</sup>

The Pharisees were primarily the sect who attached such great importance to the traditions of the elders, and who frequently quoted the authority of previous teachers when expounding and developing the Law. The Sadducees held only the Scriptural text to be binding, and considered it a virtue to dispute against their own teachers, approaching all extra-Biblical matters in a spirit of free and argumentative

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philosophy. The Sadducees would, of course, have places of instruction for their future leaders, while among the Essenes there was at least one monastic college, that of Qumran, with its own methods of interpretation and its body of esoteric doctrine (held by some scholars to have had an influence upon emergent Christianity): most of the advanced schools, however, were Pharisaic. But within Pharisaism itself there was also a division: we find, preserved in the Talmud, 316 controversies between the schools derived from Hillel and Shammai, the Hillelites being usually on the side of the greater leniency; 'the one Law has become two laws', declared the Rabbis (*Sanhedrin* 88b; *Sotah* 47b). After A.D. 70 the Pharisees superseded the other sects of Judaism, and Pharisaism as a whole became Hillelite.<sup>31</sup> The most famous colleges were, of course, in Jerusalem, and the one attended by Paul was within the school of Hillel and under the presidency of the illustrious Gamaliel. Here Paul would have absorbed the doctrines of Pharisaism, debating disputed points with his fellow-scribes, and committing the extensive oral teachings to memory, for memorization, as in the elementary school, was of prime importance, and to forget or mistake one's instruction was a grave fault.<sup>32</sup>

**(iv) The Influence of Greco-Roman Education.** There seems no sympathy of ideals and little direct contact between the Jewish and Gentile systems of education, but one or two slight points of meeting may be found. Over the centuries the Jewish scribes and rabbis gradually built up the enormous legal system which we find in the *Talmud*, a system which not only seems typically Jewish, but also appears to be a mass of involved reasonings based upon no coherent first principles. But it has been argued in an interesting article by D. Daube that

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<sup>29</sup> *JE* 5. 42; *HJP* 2. 1. 328; *EI* 24f; B. Gerhardsson, *op. cit.*, 85-92; *Jos. c.Ap.* 2.18; *Ant* 16.2.3. Philo *de Sept.* 6; *Neh* 8. 4ff; *SJSL* 120; *SJE* 297, 594; *J* 320; R. A. Stewart, *The Earlier Rabbinic Tradition* (1949), 16-19; *PP* 5; *HJP* 2. 2. 12, 53; cf. *Mark* 7. 8; C. Taylor, *op. cit.*, 119.

<sup>30</sup> *JE* 3. 117; *PTN* 82f; *Bob. Berakoth* 28a; *Ket.* 4. 6; *Eduyoth* 2. 4; *Jer. Ber.* 4. 7d; *Bab Erubin* 21b; ct. *HJP* 2. 1. 318f; *EI* 45; *SLJ* 52; *Aboth* 1. 4; *Luke* 2. 46; 10. 39; cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *St. Mark, in Camb. Gk. Test.* (1963) on *Mark* 6. 40; ct. *HJP* 2. 1. 326.

<sup>31</sup> D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 22 (1949), 243f; *Jos. Ant.* 18. 1. 4; *HJP* 2. 1. 319f; *JE* 3. 115f; *PTN* 82; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning* (1966), 70-75 (with a useful bibliography, 263-268).

<sup>32</sup> *PP* 8-11; *Acts* 22. 3 ; 23. 6; 26. 5; *Phil.* 3. 5; *HJP* 2.1. 320f; 324f; *Jos. Bell. J.* 1. 33. 2; 2. 8. 14; *Ant.* 17. 6. 2; *Vit.* 2, 38; *SJSL* 129; *J* 319f; *EI* 39ff; *PTN* 90; cf. *Aboth* 3. 9; 4.13; B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (1961), 122-136, 163-170; ct. Morton Smith, "A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 (1963), 169-176, and see further B. Gerhardsson, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (1964) and C. K. Barrett, review in *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 16 (1965), 488f.

behind the fundamental pre-suppositions and basic methods of the rabbis lie the principles taught in Hellenistic rhetoric. Daube considers, for example, Hillel's approach to jurisprudence and his famous seven norms of hermeneutics, and shows the close similarity with rhetorical principles underlying the method of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian. It has also been pointed out that, for the sake of missionary work in the Dispersion, many scribes would need to have an understanding of Hellenistic culture, and under Gamaliel II, in the latter part of the century, youths in Palestine were in fact given some elements of a Greco-Roman education. Such instruction would have been equally advantageous in the time of Gamaliel I, and it is conceivable that Paul may have made some study of Gentile literature and rhetoric while at Jerusalem.<sup>33</sup>

(v) **Practical Training.** Most un-Roman, however, was the Jewish insistence on manual skills, for combined with religious instruction was a preparation for the practical duties of life. Fathers were recommended, for example, to have their sons taught swimming, and, more important, were obliged to have them learn a trade. Such training would usually take place during and immediately after the elementary schooling, and the purpose was not only that a boy should be able to support himself in later life, but also that he should avoid a one-sided intellectual occupation with the Torah, an imbalance which was considered a drawback from a moral point of view. In accordance with this principle, our Lord became a carpenter and Paul was trained in the use of *cilicium*, a fabric of woven goats-hair, from which tents, carpets and shoes were manufactured; and other Jewish teachers also followed the custom of providing for themselves by a trade.<sup>34</sup>

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(vi) **The Extent and Status of Education among the Jews.** From our consideration so far it would appear that many, perhaps most, Jewish boys received an education until at least the age of thirteen, by the end of which they were equipped to understand their national history and Scriptures and to earn their own living. The Jewish attitude to education is well expressed by many statements in the Talmud, some of which may, however, have originated later than our period. We have already seen that the schooling system was consolidated throughout Palestine by A.D. 65: we also read that as many schoolmasters as wish may be allowed to establish themselves in any town, and that no man who claims to be educated should live in a place where there is no schoolteacher.

Women did not receive so high an education as men, and were discouraged from engaging in legal studies. The Jewish teachers considered that woman's mission and duties lay in other directions; that the subjects studied were not always suitable for women; that it was not desirable for the sexes to study together; and that a woman's mind was not adapted for scholarly activity. Girls usually remained under the supervision of their mother until marriage. Yet, despite the obstacles, there were always educated, and even learned, women to be found.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> D. Daube, *art. cit.*, 240-261; cf. *idem*, *JRS* (1948) 115ff; W. L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity* (1942), 31ff; cf. *Bab. Sotah* 49b; cf. *PP* 10; and cf. W. C. van Unnik, *op. cit.*, 57.

<sup>34</sup> *HDB* 3. 646; *EI* 27, 39; *JE* 5. 44; *Bab. Kiddushin* 29a, 30b; *Aboth* 2. 2; *EI* 16; *Mark* 6. 3; *PP* 7f; *Acts* 18. 3; *SLJ* 53; *HJP* 2. 1. 318; 2. 2. 46; N. Drazin, *op. cit.*, 60; cf. *Jos. c.Ap.* 2. 15ff.

<sup>35</sup> See note 27 above; *SJSL* 134; *Bab. B. Bath.* 21b; *Bab. Sanhedrin* 17b; *JE* 5.42ff; *Sotah* 3. 4; N. Drazin, *op. cit.*, 128-133; *SJSL* 132; *SJE* 594; *SLJ* 58; *Bab. Sanh.* 39a; *EI* 17.

Students and teachers of theology were given great honour, and even the elementary schoolteacher was accorded the highest respect. The *Beth ha-midrash* ranked as higher than a synagogue; mothers acquired merit for teaching their children to go to school and wives for waiting for their husbands to return each day from advanced study; it was highly meritorious to be the first to arrive at the college and the last to leave; every session was expected to bring some new idea and fresh lesson to the student.<sup>36</sup>

The Jewish system of education, like the Hellenistic, was open to pedantic excesses, and there was, in both systems, a gulf between the mass of the people and the intellectual élite, for, among the Jews, the scribes sometimes despised the *am ha-arez*, 'this crowd, who do not know the Law'. But the Jews' conception of a universal, free schooling was far in advance of Roman thinking: even in the Greek cities which provided schools, education was mainly for the benefit of the middle-class citizens. The Jewish ideal was that instruction should be open equally to rich and poor, that it should be practical as well as intellectual, and that its purpose should be to promote the type of life that pleased God. Such an ideal did much to safeguard a Jewish child from the supercilious remoteness sometimes inculcated by the Greco-Roman system. Sir William Ramsay was hardly overstating the case when he wrote:

'The Hebrew nation was at that time the most highly educated people in the world, in the true meaning of the word "education".'<sup>37</sup>

## II. ENTERTAINMENT

**a. Greco-Roman Entertainment.** If the majority of people in the Roman empire were excluded from a thorough education, they were certainly not excluded from entertainments, of which there was a wide variety. For private and family amusement the ancients had almost as many games as our own contemporaries. Marbles and draughts were quite popular, especially among the Greeks, as also were board-games resembling backgammon and chess among the Romans: sometimes the 'boards' were scratched on the pavement. Knucklebones were used in various

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simple games, and were also employed as dice: gambling with dice was, for most of the time, officially illegal at Rome, but in practice became a national vice. One simple and relaxing after-dinner game was the 'wine-throw', in which the circle of diners, each reclining on his left elbow, had to throw the last drops of wine from their cups into a basin set in the middle, sometimes with the object of sinking a number of saucers floating in the basin. For the more energetic there were ballgames resembling in some respects our hockey, rugby and lacrosse: adults as well as young people participated, and sometimes the Campus Martius at Rome contained 'a multitude of those exercising themselves with ball and hoop and in the sports-field' (Strabo 5. 236).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Matt. 23. 6f; Mark 12. 38f; Luke 11. 43; 20. 46; *Baba Metzia* 2. 11; *Aboth* 4. 12; cf. *Bab. Sanh.* 110a; *EI* 45f; *HEA* 317; *HJP* 2. 1. 315, 317; *SJE* 594.; *JE* 3. 117; 5. 43; *Bab. Meg.* 26b, 27a; *Ber.* 17a; *Shab.* 127a; *Sukkah* 28a; *Hagigah* 3a; *J* 315; cf. *EI* 11f.

<sup>37</sup> *JE* 5. 43; John 7. 49; *J* 321; *WR* 71f; W. M. Ramsay, *The Education of Christ* (2nd ed. 1902), 65; *J* 322; *RC* 287; *SEH* 139; *EI* 14; W. M. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, 67; cf. A. C. Bouquet, *Everyday Life in New Testament Times* (1953), 156.

<sup>38</sup> *OCD* s.vv. *Astragalus*, *Ball-games*, *Dicing*, *Games*, *Ludi* (ii); *Athenaeus* 15. 2-7; *Galen Script. Min.*, *On the Small Ball*.

But it is the variety and splendour of public entertainment for which the Roman empire is chiefly noted. The lower classes were excluded from politics, but were kept happy by an imperial subsidy for their food-supply and a lavish provision of public amusement. Shows were provided by the annually elected magistrates and sometimes by wealthy private individuals, but above all, and especially at Rome, by the emperors themselves. The economical Augustus (B.C. 31-A.D. 14) tells us of the great displays of chariotry, athletics, wild-animal hunting, gladiators and pitched-battles which he found it necessary to provide for the people, and the equally careful Vespasian (A.D. 69-79) began the building of the largest amphitheatre in the world, the Colosseum. Sometimes emperors felt it needful to use such means to counteract the influence of the Senate and to maintain their own ascendancy with the populace, and so well did they succeed that even such bloodthirsty and hateful rulers as Caligula (A.D. 37-41) and Nero (A.D. 54-68) were, extremely popular with the masses. 'Bread and Circuses' became common propaganda themes on the imperial coinage, and only Tiberius (A.D. 14-37) thought himself able to slight the people and ignore their entertainment. Festival days were quite numerous: in the time of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) there were 93 regular holidays each year (in the second century the number increased to 130), and there were quite often special displays as well, sometimes of extended duration; at the opening of the Colosseum, for example, Titus (A.D. 79-81) held a festival for 100 days. As may well be imagined, very considerable expense was involved in such a policy of keeping the people moderately passive and contented.<sup>39</sup>

(i) **Chariots.** Racing was extremely popular: races on horseback were sometimes held, but four-in-hand chariot racing was the most common form of the sport. The races at Rome were held in the Circus, which formed an ideal arena, being about 650 yards long and 160 yards wide, and having, by the end of the first century A.D., seating accommodation for nearly 200,000 people. The surrounding area was the natural resort of astrologers and fortune-tellers, food merchants and prostitutes. The vast expanse of the Circus could not be covered with an awning: and there was no protection against the weather except the coverings which spectators could bring with them. A day's display would begin with a great religious procession, led by the person who was giving the games: the sacred statues of Rome would be carried in the ceremony, together with portraits of the emperor and the imperial family, a fact which could sometimes lead to expressions of political opinion from the crowd.<sup>40</sup>

On a festival-day spectators would start off for the Circus long before dawn, and by the reign of Nero it was customary for the racing to last until dusk. Chario-

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teers were organized into four teams or factions, distinguished by colours: the Whites, the Reds, the Blues, and the Greens. Spectators would shout for their own particular heroes, and the horses also were known by name to the crowds and publicly acclaimed. Although each chariot was normally drawn by four horses, two horses were sometimes used, and expert drivers would occasionally employ a much larger number: Nero, on a visit to Olympia, is said to have driven ten horses. The chariots themselves were light two-wheelers, and the number

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<sup>39</sup> *WR* 86ff; *ASP* 60, 63; *RLM* 1; *Res Gest. Div. Aug.* 22ff; *Suet. Aug.* 43. 1; *RLM* 2; *ASP* 68, 70; *Jos. Ant.* 19. 1. 15f; *Tac. Hist.* 1. 4; ct. *Suet. Nero* 57; *Suet. Tib.* 34. 1; *WR* 88; *ASP* 72; *RLM* 9ff.

<sup>40</sup> *RLM* 19ff; Dionysius Halicarnassus 3. 68; *Juv.* 6. 588; *Hor. Sat.* 1. 6. 113; *Cic. Pro Mil.* 24 (64ff); *Juv.* 3. 65; *RLM* 36; *Suet. Claud.* 12.



of chariots in a race could be as many as twelve. A contest would cover seven laps, about five miles, and would last no longer than fifteen minutes. The most dangerous points on the course were the turns around the post at each end of the Circus: sometimes drivers fell and were dragged along by their horses; collisions between the chariots were frequent, and it was a tactic to be admired if one could force an opponent into a disastrous crash. The spectators sometimes became frantic with excitement and greeted the winning chariot with thunderous shouting, applause mingled with the curses of the losing side, the noise echoing through the empty streets of the city.<sup>41</sup>

The men who gave the festivals were not usually themselves able to provide the horses and drivers, and so the organizing was taken over by business-companies with access to stud-farms and supplies of slaves, and the colour-factions were in fact controlled by such firms. The business was most profitable. Charioteers themselves were often able to gain huge sums of money: one expert under Domitian won fifteen purses of gold within an hour, and Juvenal put the income of a certain Red charioteer as one hundred times more than that of an advocate. Numerous statues of charioteering heroes were erected in public squares. The whole population of Rome and other large cities was split into four factions supporting the chariot-teams, and even the emperor was an open partisan of one side or another. The days before a chariot race were filled with eager suspense, and even educated men made the coming event their main topic of conversation; large bets were placed and magic was employed in attempts to influence the result. The supporters of the factions often resorted to physical violence and terrorism against one another, and the emperors, by their partisan attitude, only fanned the flames of hostility they were doubtless well-pleased that the brutality of the mob should find an outlet motivated by sport and not by politics.<sup>42</sup>

(ii) **Gladiators.** But it was not only racing that engaged the attention of the emperor's subjects: gladiatorial combat ranked equally as a source of public attraction. At Rome itself there was always more than one place for displays of gladiators, but all other centres were surpassed when the Flavian amphitheatre, the Colosseum, with room for 50,000 spectators, was opened in A.D. 80. But gladiators were by no means limited to Rome: the remains of more than 70 stone amphitheatres have been found throughout the empire (in Britain for example at places like Chester and Dorchester), and probably many more, now lost, were constructed of wood; in towns where no purpose-built arena existed gladiators fought in the theatres. King Herod had an amphitheatre at Caesarea, and Herod Agrippa built one at Berytus (Beirut); and combats also took place at Tiberias, Jericho and Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> The displays in the provinces were doubtless never so magnificent as those at Rome, but they were nevertheless numerous: during the reign of Claudius local magistrates and procurators gave so many shows that some

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<sup>41</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 26; *RLM* 22ff, 38; Dio 59. 5; 61. 17; Suet. *Nero* 24; *LP* 136-140; *RLM* 37ff; Lactant. *Inst. Div.* 6.20. 32; Sen. *Ep.* 83. 7; Juv. 11. 197; *Dio Chrysostom Or.* 32. 46, 74f, 77ff, 81.

<sup>42</sup> *RLM* 27; *LP* 145; Mart. 10. 74; Juv. 7. 112ff; Mart. 5. 25; 11. 1. 13-16; Lucian *Nigrin.* 29; *RLM* 29f; *WR* 88; Suet. *Calig.* 55; *Nero* 11, 22; Dio 59. 14; 63. 6; Mart. 11. 33; Tac. *Dial.* 29; Pliny *EP* 9. 6; Juv. 11. 197ff; *LP* 145f; 148.

<sup>43</sup> *RLM* 40; *ASP* 155; *G* 121; see illustrations in *G* 44-47; many inscriptions, sculptures, etc. are listed in L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'Orient Grec*; list of amphitheatres in *RLM* IV append. 36; *G* 78-88; *JRS* (1968) 183f; *ASP* 165f; Jos. *Ant.* 15. 8. 1; 15. 9. 6; 17. 8.2; 19.7.5; *Bell. J.* 1. 33. 8; *ASP* 166; Tac. *Ann.* 13. 31; ct. *LP* 175-178.

provinces were in danger of suffering under the expense, and Nero issued an edict temporarily forbidding such local exhibitions.

Once more the spectators would arrive before dawn to claim their seats, and the exhibition would last all day. Amphitheatres could be protected against the weather and extant advertisements promise the public an awning against the sun and water-sprinkling to keep down the dust; the Colosseum boasted perfumed fountains to cool the air. The day would open with a procession of the gladiators, and then, after an inspection of the weapons, several mock-fights would be fought, to the music of an hydraulic organ. A blast on a war-trumpet would signal the beginning of the real battles with sharp weapons, which would be accompanied by the sound of trumpets, horns and flutes, the music sometimes drowning the noise of the combat.<sup>44</sup> Many kinds of gladiators would appear: some, half-naked, and armed only with a net, a trident and a dagger (*retiarii*), would be pursued by more heavily armed opponents (*secutores*); others would wear heavy armour of different designs, sometimes after a particular national pattern (for example, myrmillones, Thracians, Samnites); most would be on foot, but some were mounted on horses or elephants, or in chariots. Between the combats boys would shovel away the bloodstained ground, slaves would sprinkle fresh sand, and men dressed as messengers of the underworld, after probing with hot irons to ensure against feigned death, would take the corpses away through the gate of the Goddess of Death. Sideshows would add variety to the proceedings, with jugglers, rope-dancers and acrobats often appearing and displays of fireworks being shown. Largesse was distributed to the spectators, for meat, poultry and fruit were sometimes showered down upon the audience, as were also free lottery tickets entitling the holders to valuable prizes; on such occasions there was often much rough behaviour and loss of life in the crowd. The organisers and spectators sought as much variety as possible: illuminated spectacles were held at night; negroes or dwarfs or women were set to fight; pitched battles were given after which the arena would be covered with thousands of dead; naval fights were shown in flooded Circus or amphitheatre, and Claudius filled a lake with one huge naval battle, in which 19,000 criminals fought on each side.<sup>45</sup>

The men who fought as gladiators often in fact were criminals, for such a punishment was used for the more serious crimes. Often, too, they would be slaves, for there was no restriction to prevent an owner selling his slaves to the arena. Quite frequently the gladiators would be prisoners of war: the Britons captured under Claudius and the Jews under Titus were so treated. Occasionally ruined and impoverished men would volunteer for the profession; and sometimes injustices and atrocities were known to occur, when innocent, free-born citizens were forced to enter the arena. When they were not fighting, the men would be kept under close guard, as if in prison, but condemnation to the gladiators did not always mean death: magnificent rewards were given to the victors and they wore richly decorated armour; a man could be released from fighting after three years' service, and the crowds could demand the release of an especially brave warrior.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *RLM* 12; Celsus *de re med.* 1. 3; Lucretius 4. 75ff; *G* 63-77; *Juv.* 3. 35; *RLM* 59f, 79.

<sup>45</sup> *RLM* 60f; *G* 58-63; see illustrations in *G* 19-23, 41, 43, 65-72; *Mart.* 2. 75. 5; *Petron.* 34; *Pliny N.H.* 7. 20 (19). 83; *Statius Silv.* 1. 6. 9ff, 65ff; *Suet. Nero* 11; *Dom.* 4; *Dio* 66. 25; *Herodian* 5. 6; *RLM* 14f, 40ff, 62; *WR* 121; *Tac. Hist.* 2. 95; *Suet. Dom.* 4; *Claud.* 21; *Dio* 61. 9; 63. 3; 67. 8; *Tac. Ann.* 12. 56, 13. 31; 15. 32; *G* 88-91.

<sup>46</sup> *G* 28ff; *Suet. Claud.* 14; *RLM* 43ff; *Dio* 60. 30; *Jos. Bell. J.* 6. 9. 2; 7. 2. 1; 7. 3. 1; *Manilius Astron.* 4. 225; *Suet. Vitell.* 12; *Calig.* 35; *Tib.* 7; *Nero* 30; *Mart. de Spect.* 29. 6; *WR* 121; *G* 43, 77f.

Gladiatorial combat was, at first, less popular in the eastern provinces, but amphitheatres and the entertainment associated with them were in the course of time demanded over the whole Roman world. During spectacles at Rome itself the city had to be patrolled to prevent burglaries in the deserted streets. The gladiator was both feared and admired, and was especially popular with women. Even

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noblemen and emperors occasionally dressed and fought in gladiatorial fashion, or gave partisan support, laying bets upon a particular type of fighter. Condemnation of the whole system came from a few philosophers, but, apart from them and the Jews, very few people wished to criticize; the majority seem to have experienced a lively sadistic pleasure at the sight of cruelty and suffering.<sup>47</sup>

**(iii) Animals.** Animals also very frequently appeared in amphitheatres, or on the stages of theatres temporarily barred off. Wild beasts were brought from the boundaries of the empire and beyond: a thriving industry arose in connection with the capture and transport of animals, and many regions were depopulated of wild-life. At Rome camels were used in chariot-racing, and many of the more exotic animals were put on show. The famous trainers of Alexandria supplied the capital and the provinces with all kinds of performing beasts: not only did a dog play a leading role in a stage-drama, but trained apes, bridled stags and performing cranes made their appearance, together with elephants which danced on tightropes, and lions which at one moment killed bulls and at the next caught hares safely in their mouths and delivered them unharmed to the trainers. Tamed animals were among the prizes given by Nero in his free public lotteries.<sup>48</sup>

But most of the animals were used to provide blood-sport for the spectators. Hunts (*venationes*) were often staged in the arena, sometimes as interludes between chariot-races at the Circus, and sometimes as a prelude to a day of mixed entertainment. At the dedication of a temple in A.D. 37 Caligula gave a *venatio* of 400 bears and 400 African beasts, while at the opening of the Colosseum by Titus 9,000 animals were killed during the hundred-day festival. Cock-fighting had always been popular in the east, but much larger combats occurred in the amphitheatres, between different kinds of animals (a bull and a bear, for example) and between men and animals. One type of gladiator specialized in animal fighting; sometimes amateur hunters displayed their prowess; sometimes elephants were used in gladiatorial mêlées; and occasionally military horsemen would be employed, as under Nero when a troop of Praetorian cavalry engaged 400 bears and 300 lions. Bull-fighting was also popular, with the bulls rendered savage by torture beforehand.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *LP* 175ff; *WR* 119f; *RLM* 16f, 82-85; see note 43 above; *Mart.* 5. 24. 10; *Juv.* 6. 78-113; *Suet. Aug.* 43; *Calig.* 32, 54; *Nero* 12; *Tit.* 8; *Juv.* 8. 197; *Dio* 59. 5; 66. 15; *WR* 122f; *RLM* 85; *Cic. Tuse.* 2. 17; *ad Fam.* 7. 1; *Sen. Ep.* 7. 2.; cf. 90. 45; *G* 92-124.

<sup>48</sup> *ASP* 62f, 80ff, 166ff; *LP* 178-181; *RLM* 67, 69; *Stat. Silv.* 2. 5. 28; *Strabo* 15. 704; among the animals that appeared were: tiger, leopard, elk, bison, bear, polar-bear, one-horned and two horned rhinoceros, crocodile, deer, gazelle antelope, etc.; *Plutarch de Soll. An.* 5; 19. 9; *Pliny N.H.* 7. 2. 21ff; 8. 17 (25). 65; *Suet. Aug.* 43. 4; *Galba* 6. 1; *Dio* 61. 9. 1; *Calpurnius Ecl.* 7. 57-695; *Sen. Ep.* 41. 6; 85. 41; *Mart.* 1. 6, 14, 22, 44, 48, 51, 60, 104; *RLM* 70; *ASP* 70.

<sup>49</sup> *Suet. Claud.* 21. 3; *RLM* 62ff; *Dio* 53. 27. 6; 56. 27. 5; 59. 7. 3; 66. 25; *Suet. Tit.* 7. 3; *Strabo* 17. 814f; *ASP* 62; see illustrations in *G* 105ff; *DL* 69; *RLM* 71; *Pliny N.H.* 8. 2. 5; 8. 7. 22; *Sen. de Ira* 3. 43. 2; *Mart.* 13. 95; *de Spect.* 15; *WR* 124; *ASP* 69 f; *G* 62 *Juv.* 4. 94-101.

Wild animals were also used for the public execution of criminals, the condemned men being sent into the arena defenceless or insufficiently armed. The incident of Androclus and the lion occurred under Claudius. Executions often seem to have been deliberately planned to increase the agony of the victims, and sometimes the punishment would take a dramatic form, representing perhaps some story from mythology and culminating in the destruction of the principal actor: in such a representation the Christian martyrs under Nero were sewn into the skins of beasts and torn in pieces by hunting hounds. Such spectacles were to be seen in amphitheatres throughout the empire, illustrating once more the prevailing free expression of sadistic pleasure; eventually they were to empty the theatres and to become even more popular than chariotry.<sup>50</sup>

(iv) *Athletics*. With the gymnasium and the *ephebia* at the centre of the traditional Greek education, and with the important position of the Sacred Games in Hellenistic civilization, it is not surprising that athletics enjoyed greater popularity in the eastern Mediterranean than at Rome and in the western provinces. Some, indeed, of the old-fashioned and conservative Romans long resisted the spread of athletic

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contests, for, like the Jews, they objected to the nudity associated with exercises and games. But contests were nevertheless adopted by the Romans. Augustus instituted periodic Games in Greece to commemorate his victory over Antony at Actium, and many provinces organized regular competitions in honour of Augustus it was for that purpose that Herod of Judaea established his Games. Contests were held in Rome: for example by Caligula (A.D. 37 and 39), by Claudius (A.D. 44) and by Nero (A.D. 60), and one of the most famous of all the competitions, the Capitoline Agon, was instituted there by Domitian (A.D. 86). Most successful athletes were professionals, enduring a rigorous training and diet, and enjoying the support of their home locality, since, for most people, athletic interest involved support more than active participation. And most professional athletes were Greeks, although under the influence of Nero's court many Romans became gifted amateurs, and experts could be found who would declare that athletics was absolutely indispensable for perfect health.<sup>51</sup> The items of athletics were taken over unchanged from the Greeks. For the foot-race the basic distance, the *stadion*, was about 200 yards: longer races (up to twenty-four laps) were often run, and Pliny mentions the marathon races held in his day, but the basic stadion course would still be used and the runners would make turns around a post set at the end of the course, the mark on which they would fix their sight. Sometimes armed races were held, in which the runners would wear helmets and carry shields. At an athletics contest discus- and javelin-throwing would also be seen, together with long jumping, boxing, wrestling and the *pankration*. Stone hand-weights were carried by the long jumpers, and boxers wore metal-weighted gloves and leather arm-straps; there was no boxing-ring, nor were there any rounds, but matches simply continued until one of the contestants could fight no longer. Wrestling was held on ground which had been well-prepared by digging. The *pankration* was a quite dangerous form of all-in fighting, in which boxing and wrestling were combined with kicking, strangling and twisting: only biting and gouging were excluded. For this last-mentioned sport the ground was

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<sup>50</sup> *WR* 123; Aulus Gellius 5. 14; Aelian *N.A.* 7. 48; Tac. *Ann.* 15. 14; cf. Suet. *Nero* 16; *ASP* 63, 166f; Strabo 6. 237; *RLM* 72; Suet. *Calig.* 27; *WR* 124f.

<sup>51</sup> *RLM* 13, 124; Tac. *Ann.* 14. 20; Pliny *Ep.* 4. 22; Strabo 7. 325c; Dio 51. 1; Suet. *Aug.* 18, 59; Jos. *Ant.* 16. 5. 1; *Bell J.*, 1. 21. 8; Dio 59. 9-13; 60. 23; 61. 21; *LP* 106, 111ff; Suet. *Nero* 12. 40; *Dom.* 4; *RLM* 120, 123ff; Sen. *Ep.* 15; Pliny *N.H.* 35. 13 (47). 168; Mart. 7. 32.

not only dug, but liberally watered beforehand. An athlete who won a wreath of victory at the Games (for which only free men were eligible) carried an aura of glory for the rest of his life. He would be granted tax-relief, would be maintained by his local community, and would be honoured with inscriptions and sometimes with statues. His interests would be safeguarded by a widespread and powerful athletes' guild or union. His status was less in Rome than in the provinces, and literary men often sneered at him, but he always ranked higher than a gladiator, and was invested with such glamour for many that Galen needed to caution young men against devoting themselves to athletics rather than choosing some more useful profession.<sup>52</sup>

(v) **Drama.** Plays were the most frequent of all the Greco-Roman mass entertainments, but were among the least appreciated. Theatres sprang up all over the empire, but, less popular than hippodrome and amphitheatre, were able to draw large audiences only by appealing to the lowest instincts. They did little but reinforce the corrupting influences that we have seen at work in some of the other types of entertainment. The most popular dramatic forms were short one-act farces (the *atellana* and the *mimus*), often put on as after-pieces following a longer performance. Their most common themes were love-affairs and adultery; the action was often grotesque, with much horseplay, the humour was coarse, and the

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most indecent scenes were the loudest applauded and best paid. Such farces were often used for satirical allusions to public affairs, sometimes even to the emperor himself: indeed, the theatre, like the hippodrome and amphitheatre, could at times be used for expressions of political discontent, and could become the centre of a seditious gathering; after such occasions actors were frequently penalized.<sup>53</sup>

More serious drama was still sometimes performed. Updated versions of the old comedies and tragedies were shown, and occasionally a complete Greek tragedy was acted, and usually well acted. But the mass of people were satisfied with farces, and a cultured minority could not alone sustain an intellectual theatre. Serious new drama was written only for private circulation.<sup>54</sup>

Music and dancing had always been an important part of the ancient stage, and plays were in fact more like opera and comic-opera than straight plays. Music and dancing formed the elements of one minor dramatic form, the Greek Pyrrhic, a representational stage-dance like the modern ballet, but the same elements were in fact the kernel of a much more important dramatic medium, the pantomime. Pantomime was usually concerned with themes from tragedy: a specially written libretto would be sung by a choir while a single masked dancer would represent, in dumbshow, the meaning of the words being sung. The dancer would act in succession many different parts, both male and female, changing costume for each new part, while the choir sang between the scenes. Enormous use was made of gesture, according to conventions well understood by an ancient audience, and the interpretative skill of the dancers

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<sup>52</sup> *RLM* 13, 120; *LP* 113-123; Pliny *N.H.* 7. 20. 84; illustrations of boxers in *G* 17f; *OCD* s.v. Pankration; *DL* 66; *RLM* 126ff; Suet. *Aug.* 45; *LP* 155-165; Sen. *Ep.* 15. 3; 80. 2; 88. 18; Tac. *Ann.* 14. 20; Pliny *N.H.* 15. 4 (5). 19; 18. 7 (12). 63; 29. 1 (8). 26; Pliny *Ep.* 4. 22; *LP* 107; Galen *Protr.* 9.

<sup>53</sup> *WR* 125; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1950), 263; *LP* 236; W. Beare, *The Roman Stage* (3rd ed. paperback, 1968), 173f, 233; *RLM* 12, 90ff; Gell. *N.A.* 16. 7; Beare, *op. cit.*, 238, 240; Tac. *Ann.* 4. 14; 11. 13; Suet. *Calig.* 27; *Nero* 39; *Galba* 13; *LP* 239; Beare, 236; *RLM* 6f, 93f.

<sup>54</sup> Quint. 6. 2. 35; Petron. 53; Beare, 233ff; *RLM* 96ff.

was almost legendary; to maintain their performances they needed to keep in training like acrobats. The upper classes loved pantomime as the masses loved the farce, and private pantomimes would often be performed by the slaves of wealthy households: good teachers of music and dancing were consequently in great demand. But in this dramatic form too, the spice was provided by seductive and indecent scenes.<sup>55</sup>

Less popular than the pantomime were the tragedian's recitations. Here also the centre of attraction was a single performer, but now the main medium of expression was not movement, but words. Dressed in full tragic costume, the artist would represent, in rhapsodic song, single scenes from the ancient tragedies; he might perform several parts in succession and might have the support of a choir or some *mutae personae*. The language used was often Greek. This was the acting role in which Nero loved to appear.<sup>56</sup>

Actors were sometimes slaves owned by the great households, and, in general, the theatrical profession was in low repute. Some talented performers, however, were able to rise to positions of wealth and influence, and high society under the empire was often infatuated with actors. A local theatre would not be in continuous operation, and so players needed to travel the empire: the great stars would move from one city to another, together with bands of lesser actors, who would more often appear in the smaller towns and villages, and with puppeteers also, who were especially popular in Alexandria and other parts of Egypt. The interests of actors, like those of athletes, were safeguarded by a professional union. Great rivalry existed among the more famous actors, and even the best would pay large sums of money for professional clappers to be present in the audience. Theatrical factions were formed from the supporters of rival artists and fights sometimes erupted among the theatre benches. Tiberius had to exile actors from Italy on account of their disruptive activities, but some emperors actually encouraged one or other

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of the hostile factions: it is reported that Nero was present at a theatre where one such battle occurred, and, when stones and broken seats were being hurled, he joined in with enthusiasm and fractured a praetor's skull.<sup>57</sup>

**(vi) Declamation.** We have already considered the pleasure which the more intellectual citizens found in declamations: the emperor and his court, and the educated class throughout the empire, would flock to such periodic diversions. In addition to declamations on set themes, literary men would sometimes give public recitations of their own works. At Nero's great festival of competitions in music, athletics and chariotry, there was a prize for Latin oratory and verse (reserved for the emperor himself), and at Domitian's famous Games the award for Greek and Latin poetry became the highest ambition of every poet in the empire.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Apuleius *Met.* 10. 232-236; *RLM* 98, 100ff, 108; Beare, *op. cit.*, 234; *LP* 67-68; Suet. *Nero* 54; Quint. 11. 3. 91ff; *RLM* 104, 106; Sen. *Ep.* 121. 6; Sen. *Contr.* 3. pr.; Tac. *Ann.* 1. 77; Suet. *Calig.* 55; Dom. 7; Lucian *de mere. conduct.* 27; Juv. 6. 60-66.

<sup>56</sup> *RLM* 98f; Beare, *op. cit.*, 233f; Tac. *Ann.* 14. 15; Suet. *Nero* 20f, 24.

<sup>57</sup> *RLM* 111f; Tac. *Hist.* 1. 20; *Ann.* 1. 77; 13. 19-22; Suet. *Vesp.* 19; *Galba* 15; Plut. *Galba* 16.2; Philostratus *Vit. Soph.* 2. 10; *RLM* 115; Pliny *N.H.* 7.53 (54). 184; *LP* 235, 239-245; Petron. 5; Dio 61. 8; Tac. *Ann.* 4. 14; 13. 24f; Suet. *Nero* 26.

<sup>58</sup> see above, Greco-Roman education; Beare, *op. cit.*, 1; *RLM* 120; Suet. *Nero* 12; Stat. *Silv.* 5. 3. 231; Mart. 4. 1. 6; 4. 54. 1; 9. 23. 5; Juv. 6. 387.

**(vii) Music.** Music in antiquity very often fulfilled an incidental function: we have seen that musical accompaniment was used as a background to events in the amphitheatre and in the closest connection with the stage. As the theatrical association illustrates, music was very largely subordinate to poetry: in fact it seems to have been regarded as an almost indispensable element of form for many types of poetry, and its value would in consequence be judged by its appropriateness to its text.<sup>59</sup>

Ancient music was very different from modern European. There existed a large number of scales or modes, which differed in tonality, and in the sequence of the intervals which composed them. As in Gregorian Chant, the tonal centre was not in the same relative position in each scale; 'quarter-tones' were employed, and the 'semitones' were not placed at equal intervals as they are in modern western music: the resulting sound would resemble the music of India or China. In addition to the solo voice accompanied by cithara or flute, choral singing was practised, but always in unison and not in harmony; the musical accompaniment could occasionally diverge from the melody, but does not seem even then to have formed an independent contrapuntal voice or to have given a true harmonic basis to the performance.

The two most common instruments were the cithara and the flute. The cithara or lyre, an upright, stringed instrument with strings of equal length, was played by plectrum or fingers, the use of the bow being unknown; the instrument was made in many different sizes. The 'flute' was akin to a clarinet or oboe rather than to a modern flute. The cithara was harder to play, but the flute was more dramatic and passionate. Trumpet and horn were used mainly for military purposes, while cymbals, tambourines and drums were associated chiefly with the religious cults of Dionysius and Cybele. Oriental psalteries and bagpipes were known, but were not used in serious music. The choir at pantomimes was accompanied by a large orchestra, which included flutes, panpipes, cymbals, citharae and lyres, while time was kept with wooden clappers operated by the feet. Musical purists condemned such orchestral development, together with the tendencies under the empire to make instruments larger and louder, and to give mass concerts in which performers outnumbered listeners.<sup>60</sup>

Sometimes music was performed in its own right and not linked with words, Virtuosi (who were very often Alexandrians) would give solo instrument recitals often skilfully achieving the ancient aim of making music express and inspire different moods and emotions. The flute was especially well-suited to such a purpose

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one famous descriptive solo piece for the flute represented a battle between Apollo and a giant serpent. The hydraulic organ was also sometimes used as a solo instrument and, according to Quintilian, possessed great powers of expression. The cithara was less colourful and versatile: after a citharoedus had attempted to portray a storm at sea, a malicious flute-player remarked that he had heard greater storms when his saucepans boiled.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *RLM* 13, 98ff, 107, 337ff; *OCD* 584; Juv. 7. 18; 11. 180; Quint. 1. 10. 29; Pliny *Ep.* 4.19. 4; 7. 4. 9; 7. 17; Hor. *Car.* 4. 9. 3f; Ovid *A.A.* 3. 345; Ovid *Trist.* 2. 519; 5. 7. 25; cf. *OCD* 585.

<sup>60</sup> *OCD* 585-589; *RLM* 340f; Livy 39. 6; Hor. *Sat.* 1. 21; Juv. 3. 62ff; *RLM* 102, 346; Ovid *Remed.* 753ff; Quint. 1. 10. 31; Hor. *A.P.* 202f; Sen. *Ep.* 84. 10.

<sup>61</sup> *RLM* 341ff, 345; Ovid *A.A.* 3. 318; Philostrate. *Vit. Apoll. Tyan.* 5. 21; Quint. 1. 10. 25; 9. 4. 11; Athenaeus 8. 338a.

Virtuosi, like actors, were continually travelling the empire, from one theatre to another. There was great rivalry among them, especially when they were competing in festivals. The festivals held by Nero and Domitian included prizes for musical performance, and sometimes, in addition to Greek virtuosi, distinguished Romans competed. According to his biographers, Nero regarded himself as an outstanding vocalist and cithara-player, an opinion not shared by all his contemporaries. The coinage of A.D. 64-66 portrays the emperor as Nero-Apollo, the divine musician, playing a cithara, and in A.D. 66-67 he undertook a musical tour of Greece, giving performances in the theatres and competing in the festivals. The festivals were all rearranged, in order that they should coincide with the emperor's visit. Nero's voice was not of the highest quality, a misfortune which he attempted to remedy by strenuous practice and exercise-without success. He consequently appreciated a captive audience and would have the theatre doors locked to ensure that no-one should leave before his performance was over. A body of paid applauders was present, and spies were posted to observe the reactions of the audience. The emperor was awarded all the prizes for which he entered.<sup>62</sup>

Music was not considered an essential part of a boy's education, but many of the wealthy and noble were able to play and sing, and great households employed music-masters for the training of slaves. Slaves were often required to provide background music during and after meals, sometimes to the irritation of the guests, and it was even known for musicians to provide a pleasant accompaniment for their master on his excursions from home.<sup>63</sup>

**b. Jewish Attitudes to Entertainments.** The Jews possessed many of the same informal, family amusements as the Gentiles: women, for example, found relaxation in simple games with knucklebones or a small ball. But as the concept of life became more and more serious many of the stricter teachers expressed disapproval of all games except those which improved the mental agility of the players, like riddles and guessing-games. Young women in Israel before A.D. 70 seem to have played a game which resembled tennis, and which incurred the condemnation of the rabbis: later teachers instanced the practice as one of the reasons for the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the judgement of God. Gambling with dice and betting on racing-pigeons were fiercely denounced, and gamblers were disqualified as witnesses in a court of law. The skill of juggling, however, was excepted from the general disapproval, and many rabbis were expert jugglers, achieving with material objects what more modern theologians have accomplished with words. Simeon ben Gamaliel, who died in the sack of Jerusalem, used to astonish his audience by juggling with eight burning torches, and other rabbis are mentioned as having juggled with knives, goblets and eggs. Games and exercises connected with military training were, of course, also approved, and so we find commonly among the Jews foot-races, weight-lifting, and target practice with bow and with sling.<sup>64</sup>

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Greek athletic games had been brought into Jerusalem by Menelaus before the Maccabean revolt; they had been popular with many, and some of the priests had even neglected their

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<sup>62</sup> *RLM* 354; Dio 63. 8; Mart. 4. 5. 8; *RLM* 119f, 352f; Tac. *Ann.* 14. 20; H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero* (1.959), 318, n. 18; Sen. *Apocol.* 4; Suet. *Nero* 20, 22-25.

<sup>63</sup> *RLM* 357ff; ct. *OCD* 585; Sen. *Ep.* 88. 9; Quint. 1. 10. 22; Manil. 4. 525ff; 5. 329; Dio 57.18; Juv. 7. 175ff; Mart. 3. 4; Gell. 19.9. 3-5, 8; Cic. *ad Fam.* 16.9; Hor. *A.P.* 374; Juv. 11. 162; Mart. 5. 78; 9. 77. 3; Cic. *Pro. Mil.* 21 (55); *Pro Coel.* 15 (35); Sen. *Ep.* 51. 4; Suet. *Calig.* 37.

<sup>64</sup> Jos. *Ant.* 8. 5. 3; 8. 6. 5; *Lam. R.* 2. 4; *JE* 5. 563; *Bab. Sanh.* 24b; *Shab.* 23. 2; *Jer. Suk.* 5. 55c; *Bab. Suk.* 53a; *JE* 2. 271; 5. 564.



duties in order to participate, but the pious had reacted violently against the innovation. By New Testament times, however, Gentile amusements were again to be found in Israel. Herod, in 7 B.C., established contests to be held every fifth year in honour of Augustus: Augustus, indeed, in a gesture of goodwill, supplied him with the necessary equipment. Herod built a theatre and an amphitheatre at Jerusalem; there were gladiatorial combats at Jericho, a circus at Caesarea, and a stadium at Tiberias, in which, eventually, 1,200 Jews were to be killed by Vespasian. Even an unimportant town like Tarichea had its own hippodrome. Herod Agrippa (died A.D. 44) built an amphitheatre at Berytus (Beirut), into which he sent as gladiators all the criminals of his kingdom in one spectacular battle, with 700 men fighting on each side.<sup>65</sup> But however much Herod and his family tried to dazzle the Jews by the splendour of such exhibitions, many people, and certainly the orthodox, regarded circus, theatre and stadium as the distinctive, sinful institutions of pagan Rome, and considered the presence of such buildings at Jerusalem as a blasphemy against God. We cannot assume, however, that the mass of the people would behave in the way that the pious would wish, by denying themselves these entertainments.

Some teachers allowed the people to enter the hated buildings if public meetings connected with local government were to be held there; some even tried to find good in the entertainments themselves, as did Gamaliel II in the latter part of the century, considering Jewish participation to be a necessary preliminary to understanding the Romans; the majority, however, utterly condemned. Jews who attended the heathen spectacles were sitting 'in the seat of the scornful': an actual anathema was pronounced against attending the circus; the existence of such entertainments was held to be a reason why devastating earthquakes occurred.<sup>66</sup> The orthodox were shocked by the images in theatres, and offended by the theatrical satire sometimes directed against Jews. One Alexandrian Jewish writer in the second century B.C. had been inspired by Euripides to write a drama, 'The Exodus', but no later Jewish writer had followed his example. There was genuine horror felt at the waste of human life in the amphitheatre, and although some impoverished Jews sold themselves to the gladiator-masters for large sums of money, the vast majority of Jews who appeared in the arena were those who had been condemned to such a fate by Titus in A.D. 70.<sup>67</sup>

**c. Paul and the Arena.** Metaphors drawn from the milieu of the arena are quite often to be found in the writings of Paul. One extended passage is I Con 9. 24ff (the words in italics being terminology connected with the Games):

'Do you not know that in a *race (stadion)* the *runners* all compete (lit. *run*); but only one receives the *prize*? So *run* that you may obtain it. Every *athlete (agonizomenos)* exercises *self-control* in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath (*stephanos*), but we an imperishable. Well, I do not *run* aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air, but I pommel my body...'

In Phil. 3. 14 we meet the ideas of the mark or goal and the prize, and the picture of the runner is found also in Rom. 9. 16; Gal. 2. 2; 5. 7 and Phil. 2. 16. Words such as *strive* and *conflict*

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<sup>65</sup> *JE* 2. 270; 1. Macc. 1. 14; 2. Macc. 4. 9ff; *Jos. Ant.* 15. 8. 1; 15. 9. 6; 16. 5. 1; 19. 7. 4f; 19. 8. 2; *Bell. J.* 1. 21. 8; 2. 3. 1; 2. 21. 3; 3. 10. 10; *RLM* 9, 45; A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (1937), 250; *RLM* 4. 251ff; *G* 29.

<sup>66</sup> T. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire* (1909) 2. 181; *HJP* 2. 1. 33; *Bab. Ket.* 5a; *Jos. Bell. J.* 7. 3. 3; cf. Acts 19. 28-41; *Gen. R.* 80. 1; *Bab. Abodah Zarah* 18b; *JE* 2. 271; 4. 103; *Gen. R.* 67. 3; *Pesik.* 168b; *Jer. Ab. Zar.* 40a; *Jer. Ber.* 13c; *HJP* 2. 1. 32.

<sup>67</sup> *Jos. Ant.* 15. 8. 1; *JE* 4. 648; cf. *LP* 237; *Bab. Gittin* 47a; *Jer. Terumoth* 45d; *JE* 2. 271; *G* 28f; *JE* 5. 675.

(*sunathlein, agonizesthai, agon*) occur in Phil. 1. 27-30 and Col. 1. 29; 2. 1; 4. 12f; while metaphorical allusions (often, but not always

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obvious in our English versions) are also to be found in the following places Rom. 15. 30; Phil. 4. 1, 3; Col. 2. 18; 3. 15; 1 Thess. 2. 2, 19; 1 Tim. 4. 7-10; 6. 1 ff; II Tim. 2. 3ff; 4. 6ff. In I Cor. 4. 9 Paul speaks of the apostles' being exhibited, like condemned men, as a *spectacle (theatron)* to the whole world, and in I Cor. 15. 32 he gives us a picture from the *venationes* when he speaks of having fought with beasts at Ephesus. Similar language may also be noticed in other New Testament books: for example, in Heb. 5. 14; 10. 32ff; 11. 33; 12. 1-4, 11; II Pet. 2. 14; Jude 3.<sup>68</sup>

It should not be imagined that Paul is necessarily writing from personal attendance at, and observation of, the Greco-Roman entertainments. Metaphorical language drawn from this milieu had long been common, and was especially used by philosophic and moral writers—by Hellenistic Jews as well as by Gentiles. In spite of the many distasteful elements associated with the Games, Paul is able to use generalized and familiar language to illustrate the principles involved in a Christian's living the life of faith and striving for the Gospel.<sup>69</sup> The Christian strives not to win glory for himself, but, to bring satisfaction and honour to the Master whose slave he has become. And in this struggle Paul is confident of the strength for victory, since he is convinced that for Jew and Gentile alike—for all who live in the environment of the first century A.D.—the Gospel is 'the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith' (Rom. 1. 16).

### III. EPILOGUE

Not everyone, of course, recognized the Gospel as the power of God. Jesus taught with prophetic authority and in a manner refreshingly unlike the tradition-bound attitude of the scribes (Mark 1. 22): his hearers were astonished at his wisdom, knowing that he had not received the higher education given to religious leaders. 'Where did this man get all this?', they asked in surprise (Mark 6. 2; John 7. 14), and their amazement was increased by the confidence and certainty shown by Christ's disciples, a group of men with equally little training in scribal studies (Acts 14. 13). But so great was the power and prestige of a traditional, exclusive education that, expert teacher though Jesus was (Mark 12. 37; John 7. 46),<sup>70</sup> many turned against him (Mark 6. 3) and few indeed of the learned scribes were willing to be thought his followers (John 7. 48; 12. 42; cf. Matt. 21. 32). Jesus preached to the poor (Matt. 11. 5), and rejoiced that God had revealed to the simple and unlearned what was hidden from the wisdom of the trained religious teacher (Matt. 11. 25). To those who were toiling under the yoke of the Torah, burdened by its multitudinous requirements, he offered the new yoke of his teaching—a yoke that was easy and a burden that was light (Matt. 11. 28-30).

Many outside Palestine also were hostile to the Gospel message. Paul varied his manner of preaching according to the needs of his audience (I Cor. 9. 20ff): to the crowd at Lystra (Acts 14. 15ff) and to the philosophers at Athens (Acts 17. 22-31) he spoke in a way very different from his approach to the congregation of a Jewish synagogue (Acts 13. 16-41). But the

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<sup>68</sup> PAM 76ff; for a detailed study of the Pauline passages see PAM 82-186.

<sup>69</sup> PAM 187-195; cf. LP 237; RLM 16.

<sup>70</sup> M. E. Manton, *The Teaching Methods of Christ* (London Bible College Annual Lecture for 1966).

manner of his speaking would never meet the stringent requirements of Greco-Roman rhetoric (I Cor. 2. 1, 4; II Cor. 10. 10), and always at the heart of his teaching was the same message: Jesus, the Cross and the resurrection (Acts 13. 23, 27-39; 17. 3, 18, 30f; I Cor. 2. 1ff). This was, to the intellectual Gentile, a message that seemed like contemptible folly (Acts 17. 32;

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I Cor. 1. 18-25), with the result, once more, that those who first responded to the Gospel included not many of the educated and well-born: it was to the poor and the simple that God revealed his truth (I Cor. 1. 26ff). The Gospel held the answer to the needs of society, but much of society regarded the message as no answer at all, and as extremely unattractive into the bargain. The populace of the empire took great pleasure in scenes of violence and cruelty: the Gospel promised blessing to the merciful, to peacemakers, and to the persecuted (Matt. 5. 7, 9, 10ff). Theatres attracted their audiences very often by sensual display: the Gospel offered God's reward only to those who were pure in heart (Matt. 5. 8). The prevalence of gambling reinforced the practices of food-subsidy and imperial largesse in directing man's attention towards material gain: Jesus gave the assurance of God's provision only for those who would first seek and do God's will (Matt. 5. 6; 6. 33). Greco-Roman education frequently had a divisive effect upon society, giving to the intellectual a contempt for those in 'sordid occupations', and fostering among the masses an equally contemptuous impatience with the cultured pursuits of a cultivated minority: Jesus promised blessing to the meek (Matt. 5. 5). Greeks and Romans believed that the virtues could be taught and could be acquired by repetitive imitation: Jews, convinced of their own moral superiority, claimed to be able to instruct and guide all other nations (Rom. 2. 17-21): to Gentile and Jew alike the Gospel proclaimed the necessity for repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and free acceptance of an unearned righteousness—the *gift* of God's salvation which could be received only by the 'poor in spirit', by those who mourned their own inability to achieve the divine standards of holy character and conduct and who were prepared to accept, by faith, the new life offered by Christ (Mark 1. 15; Acts 17. 30; 20. 21; 26. 20; Rom. 3. 19-31; 6. 23; Matt. 5. 3f; John 3. 3, 16). The intellectual and moral qualities of Christianity had to be tested and vindicated by the heat of prolonged debate, by the manner of living of unnumbered ordinary believers, and by the blood of the martyrs in the amphitheatres, before the citizens of the empire were brought to acknowledge that the Gospel was indeed the power of God for salvation.

And what, finally, of our modern world? It is still a world where education often informs a man's mind without teaching him how to live. It is a world where, in many countries, systems of instruction still tend to produce doctrinaire and dogmatic generations, with minds closed to all that is foreign to their own particular traditions. It is a world where one may still find the intellectual 'drop-outs' from society, and where a great many people, in pursuit of happiness, care little at all for the things of the mind. It is a world where violence is not rare, where mass-entertainment has a disturbingly secure hold upon imagination and conversation, where often a debased theatre and cinema appeal to what is lowest in human nature, and where sadistic pleasure can be found, albeit sometimes in refined form, in film and book. And would not Paul still say: 'The Gospel is the power of God for salvation'? And would he not still be right? The love of Christ, through the lives of Christians, conquered and revolutionized such a world. It can do so again.

#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ASP      G. Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome*, 1937

- DL J. Lindsay, *Daily Life in Roman Egypt*, 1963.  
El W. Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*, 1959.  
G M. Grant, *Gladiators*, 1967.  
HC W. W. Tarn and G. T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 3rd ed. 1952.

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- HDB *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. J. Hastings, 1895.  
HEA H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, Eng. tr. 1956.  
HJP E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr. 1885.  
J G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, 1927.  
JE *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1925.  
JRS *The Journal of Roman Studies*.  
LP J. Lindsay, *Leisure and Pleasure in Roman Egypt*, 1965.  
LRW T. G. Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*, 1910.  
NMA S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 1904.  
OCD *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. M. Cary et al., 1949.  
OR A. D. Leeman, *Orationis Ratio*, 1963.  
PAM V. C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 1967.  
PP E. W. Hunt, *Portrait of Paul*, 1968.  
PTN A. Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth*, 1964.  
RC N. Lewis and M. Reinhold, *Roman Civilization II*, 1955.  
RECQ A. Gwynn, *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian*, 1926.  
RGRE D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, 1957.  
RLM L. Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, 7th ed. Eng. tr. 1908-1913. Unless otherwise specified the references are to vol. II.  
RRS E. P. Parks, *The Roman Rhetorical Schools*, 1945.  
SBHE P. Monroe, *Source Book of the History of Education for the Greek and Roman Period*, 1901.  
SEH M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 1926.  
SJE *Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia*, ed. Cecil Roth, 1959.  
SJSL A. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, 1876.  
SLJ K. E. Keith, *The Social Life of a Jew in the Time of Christ*, 5th ed. 1959.  
WR M. Grant, *The World of Rome*, 1960.

Classical authors and Rabbinic works are abbreviated after their first occurrence in the notes. References from the *Mishnah* are taken from the edition of H. Danby (1933).

For reasons of space the references are given in paragraph-blocks, rather than in immediate connection with the individual points in the text to which they relate. Within each paragraphblock the order of sequence of the references corresponds to the order of subject-matter in the main text.

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