St. Augustine frankly confesses that he left his teaching post in Africa to avoid the bad behaviour of his students; although he was not unaware that at Rome he would also get greater pay and status. He was especially attracted by the information that students at Rome did not rush into the lecture-rooms of teachers other than their own, and were not admitted to a lecture-room at all without the permission of the lecturer. On the other hand such punishable offences were committed at Carthage, but went unpunished because consuetudo was patrona.  

However, Augustine was disappointed to find that while the young gentlemen at Rome did not indulge in the provincial horse-play of Carthage, they had developed a low cunning in evading the payment of fees by transferring to other tutors as fees fell due, so that he was glad to accept an appointment in Milan.  

Academic life in the ancient world had not always been as depressing as this. At any rate the younger Cicero in a lively letter home written in Athens in 44 and addressed to Tiro gives a more attractive account of student life. It is true that he professes profound regret for some errata aetatis meae, which he does not specify, but goes on to claim that he is not so much a pupil of Cratippus as a filius coniunctissimus, and that with him he spends the whole of the day and frequently part of the night, but perhaps spoils the impression by explaining that he invites his tutor to dine with him as often as possible, and that the philosopher proved quite able to unbend at these dinnerparties. Not that the teacher’s lot was necessarily a happy one even in the Golden Age of Latin Literature, for we are told that even Orbilius was moved to write a book full of complaints about the humiliating treatment suffered by professores through negligentia aut ambitio parentum.  

However, let us return to the 4th century and consider the experiences of a teacher who remained at his post throughout a long career, faithful to the old religion and to the traditional classical

2. Ibid. xii - xiii.  
education. Academic life in the Greek East had become just as trying as Augustine found it in Roman Africa. Once again fees are a problem; here we find the young man receiving money from his father to pay the sophist but spending it instead on drinking, gambling and pursuits which Libanius delicately refrains from specifying, and getting into a violent rage when forced to consider his behaviour.5

Libanius, who was born about 314, was already over 70 when he made these complaints, which can be dated after the riot in Antioch in 387, to which he refers later in the speech.6 But even his great age did not command the respect of the iuvenes protervi, for he goes on indignantly to report the poor response of his pupils when ordered to attend a lecture:

'I give orders for the young men to be summoned to a lecture. The boy runs off to do this. But they do not imitate his running, which they ought actually to surpass, but some concentrate on the songs, which they all know, others on idle talk, others on jesting, and when their indifference is criticized if they do decide to come, they stroll by way of the Nymphs or, to tell the truth the way of those going to what is good for them, before entering and after entering, so as to disturb those already seated as they wait for such idle young men: such is their behaviour before the performance, during it they keep making signs to each other about charioteers and mimes and horses and dancers, and frequently about a fight that has taken place or is about to do so. Meanwhile some stand like stones resting one hand on the other, others rub their noses with one hand,7 some sit while many push:

5. Lib. or. iii 6 (I i, pp. 269.21 - 270.5 Förster).
6. Ibid. 29 (I i, p. 276.11 sqq. F).
7. For the significance of this gesture, cf. Anonymi de Physiognomonia Liber 115 = Scriptores Physiognomonici ii 134 Förster: Molles autem, quos Graeci κυαβάξ dicunt, ita sunt: inclinato ad dextrum latus capite,coniunctis scapulis,qui extollunt calcanea, qui plerumque iunctos habent pedes, qui cum loquuntur glauciunt aliquatenus ut oves, qui narem suam respicient et qui narem digitis suis dirigunt atque fingunt, qui quod aut ipsi sputant aut aliis sollicita calcant et obterunt, qui saepe inspicient partes eas sui corporis quas pulchriorum sibi habere videntur, qui frequenter subrident liquentes, qui vocem tanquam perfructam habent, qui supercilia seionecta, qui demissum superius cillum ita ut inferius occupetur, quibus salientibus etiam scapulæs prossiliunt, qui movent corpus ut mulieres, qui brachia perversa habent et qui tunicam circa lumbos tendunt, qui cum rident clamant et qui frequenter manus aliorum apprehendunt.
others forcibly seat one who had been disturbed, others count those coming in late, others are content to look at the foliage, others prefer to talk about whatever comes into their minds, rather than pay attention to the speaker. And again as for more high-spirited behaviour, disrupting genuine by mock applause, and checking the shouts of approval and marching right through the theatre to the distraction of as many as possible from what is being said, now with false messages, now with a summons to the bath before dinner, some make full use of these. So, you thoughtless young men, there is no gain at all either for you, just as in the case of the absentees, nor for the speaker as far as lies in your power, when he fails to get the only reward there is for epideictic speeches.  

After contrasting the diligence of the pupils he once had, he goes on:

‘You return to your songs, which you remember very well, consigning Demosthenes to oblivion, both his last and his early writings. And if anyone asks you if I spoke and what I said, he will be told that I did speak, but not a word of what I said.’

Libanius also knows of transfers to other teachers, and after considering the thesis that there are no good students, concedes that there are some good ones but so few that they are easily counted, while there is a host of the inferior sort.

At the end of this unhappy speech to his defaulting students, he asks himself why he did not take disciplinary action that was within his power, but concludes that his nature is such that he finds it easier to suffer than to punish, and wishes to spare the feelings of the students’ parents and home-towns, where the disgrace of being sent down would naturally seem a fate worse than death. It is a sad end to a long and distinguished career as a teacher, but Libanius knew from his boyhood that academic life even at Athens was not one of complete tranquillity, in fact he even admits feeling some admiration for the young men who fought the representatives of other schools at Athens.

13. Id. or. i 19 (I i, p. 91.7 - 14 F).
However, in 387 Libanius perhaps would have preferred an inattentive audience to a complete absence of pupils, and another of his complaints is of those pupils who taking advantage of the disturbed political situation wrote home to persuade their parents that it was expedient for them to abandon their studies and leave the troubled city of Antioch, although Libanius is hardly fair in representing this as a youthful preference for idleness made possible by the acquiescence of gullible parents. Some of the young men neither sought nor awaited parental approval. Yet what seems to have hurt Libanius most is that it did not occur to any of these young refugees to invite him to flee to safety with them. 14 For while Libanius was prepared to concede that the teacher was a slave not only to the pupils nominally under his authority but also to their paedagogi and fathers, and even mothers and grandparents, 15 he did expect some return for such devoted services.

What he means by being a slave to paedagogi, may be gathered from his speech of self-justification to his pupils in which he counters the loud-mouthed abuse of a bad paedagogus who had accused him of wasting three months of a pupil's time, that is, at the time of the troubles, when both paedagogus and pupil had fled to an easier life away from Antioch. 16

Even in the year before the troubles of 387, Libanius who was always morbidly concerned about his own health had occasion to complain about the complete indifference of his pupils on this important matter, as he saw it; for in 386 he believed himself to be the victim of sorcery caused by a chamaeleon and other drugs; and yet not one of his pupils cared. 17

In the same year Libanius proposed to his fellow-teachers of rhetoric a scheme to check the abuse formed by the practice of transferring from one teacher to another. In his own youth this had been a rarity and the student who transferred was thought to show that he had no capacity for loyalty, but by the end of his career it had become an everyday occurrence, and on such a scale that some students worked their way through the classes of all teachers in the town and found themselves back with their original teacher, but only for a time until the second or even third cycle of transferring began. Perhaps we should see some rhetorical exaggeration by an

14. Id. or. xxiii 20-7 (II, pp. 502.23 - 507.3 F).
15. Id. or. xxv 46-51 (II, pp. 559.1 - 561.15 F).
16. Id. or. xxxiv (III, pp. 191-206F).
17. Id. or. i 243-250 (I i, pp. 188.18 - 191.6 F); xxxvi (III, pp. 227-35).
expert in the subject in this description. However, the practice was real enough, and the simple solution proposed was that the teachers of rhetoric should agree not to accept transfers and make their agreement known to parents and *paedagogi*. One advantage to be expected from such an agreement would be that the strap and the rod could once more be mobilised in the interests of education, since any threat to use them in the existing circumstances could lead to a threat to transfer. Thus the teacher would regain his freedom and the students would also become better through not having any opportunity to exert improper pressures on their seniors.18

But the outstanding case of ὑβρὶς by the young reported by Libanius did not involve him directly but was directed against an unfortunate *paedagogus*.19 This was the more shocking in that while riotous behaviour by young men however illegal had in the past been at the cost of outsiders, an attack on the *paedagogi* involved attacking those within the temple of the Muses. This was a revolutionary breach of the accepted conventions. In the good old days when Libanius was a student, *paedagogi* ranked next after the teachers. This is an occasion for a purple passage on the role of *paedagogi* in education. They are described as barking dogs against wolves, protecting their pupils against undesirable associations. But it is strange to find Libanius going on to eulogize the benefits that the student gets from his *paedagogus*, but could not expect from father or teacher:

'(The father) appoints a *paedagogus* for his son and then concentrates on other business, politics, farming and his male and female servants, often something happens to detain him all day at the *agora*: but there is only one task to occupy the *paedagogus* — the young man and his interests. And at night it is possible for the father to lie asleep even into the daylight hours, if he feels like it: but the *paedagogus* makes a start for himself and the young man by lamp-light and first shaking off his own sleep he goes to him doing even more than the crowing cocks in that he shakes him awake by hand. The contribution of these men is even greater than that of the teacher, who has some knowledge of the young man until noon, but after that neither sees him nor associates with him nor takes any trouble over him. What is given to the student by the teacher is guarded by the *paedagogus*. The means

18. Id. or. xliii 6-19 (III, pp. 339.21 - 348.2 F).
19. Id. or. lviii (IV, pp. 181 - 200 F).
to this guarding are found in the *paedagogus'* supervision, shouts, showing of the rod, shaking of the whip, driving the lesson into the memory, partly by efforts that are laborious, partly by those that through practice are no longer troublesome. In sickness, although this has nothing to do with Literature, they rival some mothers and surpass others — not to mention nurses. The women give up and find an aimless ease, but the *paedagogi* sit by the sick-bed providing whatever the sick require, partly giving services requested, partly even anticipating the requests. If death supervenes, the laments from the *paedagogi* are no less than those of the parents and their mourning lasts longer, so that some only stop in conformity with the law, others disregarding the law continue their mourning. Indeed I know of some who have made the tombs of their charges their own dwelling-places and with their lips pressed close to the stone have kept up a conversation with them: of these some went away at long last, others died at their post. Moreover, I know of a *paedagogus* who on the father's death proved a just guardian and removed from the boy all awareness that he was an orphan . . . And indeed I am surprised at the law-givers who have provided for fathers by punishing those children who neglect them, but have not thought *paedagogi* worthy of mention in the same documents. At any rate I myself, just as if there were many standing laws about *paedagogi*, both when I was here and when I was away, used to support mine, the cripple . . . I wish that you, too, both were and were seen to be like this.'

Libanius rejects the suggestion that all *paedagogi* are good and worthy of honour and that not one of them deserves punishment, but firmly rejects the right of the young men to take the law into their own hands, for the evil-doers must either be restrained by due process of law or left alone.

The students had cared for none of this, but had placed their unfortunate victim in the middle of a rug and amused themselves by tossing him into the air many times. Libanius professes not to know the origins of this ordeal, but it is at any rate alleged that the emperor Otho had amused himself at night in his youth by waylaying the weak and the drunk and subjecting them to this ordeal, for which he used his cloak, hence the Latin name *sagatio* which is glossed παλμός, although neither term has found its way

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into the standard Oxford dictionaries.

The indignity of the ordeal was made worse by the laughter of the persecutors and by-standers at the tossing itself and at the victim’s cries on the way up and down; meanwhile the victim at one time fell into the rug and was saved, at another missed it and fell to the ground with injury to his limbs, so that physical danger was associated with the insult.

Libanius thought such behaviour should be banned from the Roman Empire or at least from academic institutions, especially one over which he presided. Perhaps it does not appear again in European literature before Don Quixote, but at least there we find Sancho Panza undergoing the same indignity, with Don Quixote equally incapable of doing anything effective about it.22

The young men’s victim had offended another rhetorician, who had suggested this punishment, but was content to let the infamy fall on the young while he himself remained absent from the scene. Libanius makes much of his unscrupulous exploitation of students and also of the inevitable fear of the paedagogi as a class that others of them might suffer the same fate, or worse, since no one could count on escaping without serious injury if he missed the blanket.

Indeed, Libanius goes on to argue that even a slave could not plead his master’s orders as excuse for wrong-doing, far less could they plead another teacher’s orders. They should have said that they would do everying that he ordered that was legal and nothing that was illegal. For we do not obey even parents if they order illegal or sacrilegious acts. Such unquestioning obedience to teachers would expose the young to moral dangers in the case of an unscrupulous teacher. Indeed, the gossip in town was already representing this violent incident as a warning to the recognised moral tutors of the young not to intervene or attempt to check their pleasures in any way.

Finally, Libanius rejects a suggestion that he is unfair to rebuke all his students although only some had taken an active part in persecuting the paedagoge; he insists on the collective responsibility of them all since those who failed to intervene greatly outnumbered the active participants and were therefore in a position to prevent the outrage.

Rather a lot of time has been given to this act of ὕβρις, but at least Libanius intended the matter to be taken seriously. It is now

time to consider whether any causes, apart from youthful high spirits, can be found for this deterioration in student behaviour in what was after all a major seat of learning in this period.

At least a small part of Libanius' work as a scholar is still widely read today. I refer of course to his arguments to the speeches of Demosthenes which are still printed in the standard editions of the orator, and few scholars can hope for anything they write to be read 1600 years later.

However, Libanius was aware of some criticisms made of his teaching; and the great extent of his extant works, amounting to 12 volumes in the Teubner edition, enable us to assess his work as a teacher. For while the first five volumes are devoted to his speeches, of which he delivered some as a spokesman for the City of Antioch, while others, as we have seen, were epideictic or lectures to his pupils; five volumes contain declamations and other rhetorical exercises, and two his letters.

But Libanius of course did not invent this system of rhetorical training. He himself professes to remember the devoted students of earlier days, who after a lecture gathered together to piece together from their various memories the whole speech and were irritated if any part of the work of art escaped their memory altogether. The speech totally absorbed them for three or four days, at home in discussions with their fathers and of course even more so in the rhetorician's school. Yet at the end of his career he was being criticised for spending too much time on Homer and Demosthenes, and it was even suggested that his epideictic orations, of which he was so proud, were a waste of time, and unkindest cut of all, that he had himself passed his prime. To the last point he replies with injured dignity that the old men and men not yet old who are in charge of the city's affairs do not agree, but gratefully acknowledge his teaching as the cause of their success and even say that he is now even better than he was, and the students are obviously not as competent to form an opinion as their elders.

It is at least reasonably certain that there had been no fundamental change in Libanius' methods or educational ideals in a teaching career of over 40 years. For he was no reformer, but faithfully passed on what he had himself learned in a traditional

23. Lib. or. iii 17 (I i, p. 273.2 - 8 F).
24. Id. or. xxxiv 15 (III, p. 198. 13-5 F).
25. Ibid. 26 (III, p. 203, 10-2 F).
26. Id. or. iii 19-20 (I i, pp. 273, 14-274.8 F).
classical education that already had centuries of history behind it.

It starts in 5th century Greece with the claim by Greek sophists that there were no absolute values and that by persuasion one could make the worse seem the better reason; or as a later expert in rhetoric put it:

Addidit invalidae robur facundia causae.²⁷

Although Plato and Aristotle opposed this sort of view, and Plato in particular was hesitant about entrusting the immature with knowledge they could not handle in a responsible way,²⁸ many found the practical education of Isocrates more congenial than the rigorous methods of Plato and Aristotle, and rhetoric as a practical weapon in the courts and politics seemed more useful than the pure learning offered by the philosophical schools.

The system was passed on to Rome, and although Cicero drawing on his own experience and idealism saw the orator as a highly educated man playing a responsible part in the public life of his community, the Imperial system soon left little for the orator to do except work out dry legal arguments before small audiences in the courts. Quintilian believed that a return to Ciceronianism would cure society’s ills, but Tacitus with greater realism saw that the time for great oratory had passed.²⁹ Nevertheless, the rhetorical education was continued, not that this meant a sympathetic following of Ciceronian ideals of concinnitas, balanced structure and explicitness. That was old-fashioned. The demand was for point, allusion and novelty, which produced the inevitable debasement of language characteristic of the Silver Age, of which Quintilian complains:

‘Now no correct term is acceptable, since what someone else has said, is believed lacking in style,’³⁰ and again,

‘Of course we are considered intellectuals only when some intellect is needed to understand us.’³¹

²⁷. Lucan vii 67. We are reminded of an earlier definition of rhetoric attributed to Isocrates: πάω δ’ ἐρομένου τινός αὐτῶν τίρητορική εἴπε τὰ μὲν μικρὰ μεγάλα τὰ δὲ μεγάλα μικρὰ ποιεῖν’, ([Plut.] X orat. vit. 838 F = V ii, 1,17. 13-5 Mau).
²⁸. Plato, Rep. vii, 539 b-d.
²⁹. Tac. D. 41.
³⁰. Quint. viii proem. 24: quid quod nihil iam proprium placet, dum parum creditur discretum quod et alius dixisset?
³¹. Ibid. 25: tum demum ingeniosi scilicet, si ad intellegendos nos opus sit ingenio.
The futilities to which this merely verbal training and insistence on cleverness led are clear enough in the Elder Seneca's records of memorable treatments of stock themes drawn from mythology, historical fiction and an imaginary legal system concerned with pirate chiefs, raped maidens and tyrannicides, so unreal that even the most suspicious of Roman emperors could see in them no threat to his rule.

One of the stock themes in this rhetorical training was the victim of rape who had the right to demand either the execution of her aggressor or marriage to him without a dowry. No doubt this became tedious to all concerned, so Seneca can report a refinement of it in which a vigorous young man raped two women in one night: the victims exercised their right, the one to demand his death, the other marriage: Seneca preserves over five pages of bright ideas on the handling of this *controversia*, but it is difficult to see what anyone could gain from this sort of education.

As for pirates, they give the setting to the next *controversia*. 'One captured by pirates wrote to his father about the ransom: but was not ransomed. The daughter of the pirate-leader made him swear that he would marry her, if he were released; he swore. Leaving her father she went with the young man. He returned to his father, and married her. An heiress turns up. The father orders him to divorce the pirate-leader's daughter and marry the heiress. When he refuses, he disinherits him.' This produces over six pages of misdirected ingenuity.

The next one includes a gruesome element that no doubt commended it to spectators of gladiatorial shows: 'Children should support their parents, or be imprisoned. A certain man killed one of his brothers for being a tyrant, and the other when caught in adultery, in spite of his father's pleas. When captured by pirates he wrote to his father about the ransom. The father wrote a letter to the pirates saying that if they cut off his hands, he would pay double. The pirates released him (on these terms). He fails to support his father when reduced to poverty.' Perhaps one more example of this wrong-headed ingenuity may be mentioned:

'A husband and wife swore that if anything happened to one, the other would die. The husband went abroad and sent a messenger

to his wife to say that her husband had died. The wife threw herself over a cliff. After receiving first aid she is ordered by her father to divorce her husband; she refuses and is disinherited.\textsuperscript{35}

Another feature of this rhetorical training was the practice of what in modern terms would be called ‘fine’ or ‘creative’ writing about things hardly worth mentioning. So we find Fronto, tutor to Marcus Aurelius, writing \textit{Laudes Fumi et Pulveris} and \textit{Laudes Neglegentiae}. It is perhaps unfortunate for that Cicero of his age, that so much of his work was at last deciphered from a difficult palimpsest last century; for we can no longer regret what did not survive nor wonder at the decision of Marcus Aurelius to devote himself to Greek Philosophy, however difficult that was for Fronto to accept.

Let us return to Libanius labouring at the same rhetorical traditions and themes centuries later and his volumes of rhetorical exercises. These are of course demonstrations to his students of the right way to handle such themes. Among them we find \textit{An Apology of Socrates},\textsuperscript{36} \textit{The Embassy of Menelaus to the Trojans concerning Helen}\textsuperscript{37} and a companion piece in the character of Odysseus.\textsuperscript{38} These are preceded by some advice on handling these characters drawn from Homer: Menelaus is to be a laconic soldier in keeping with his Spartan origin, while Odysseus’ style is to be like a snow-storm. So we find that the declamation in the character of Odysseus is nearly three times as long as that attributed to Menelaus.

Historical persons also appear in these exercises, and the pair of declamations concerning Themistocles may be mentioned.\textsuperscript{39} In the first his father, Neocles, who had disinherited him in his youth, seeks to reinstate him after the battle of Salamis, and in the second Themistocles opposes the proposal.

Nor is the Senecan kind of fantasy on tyrannicides and so forth missing. A typical example is the declamation on the theme: ‘The Law provides that a tyrant is not to be buried and that his slayer is to receive a reward. Callaeschrus having killed his son Critias, the tyrant, asks for his burial’.\textsuperscript{40} This incidentally shows the liberty with which the rhetoricians handled historical situations, for we have

\begin{footnotes}
\item[35] \textit{Ibid.} ii 2(10).
\item[36] \textit{Lib. decl.} i (V, pp. 13-121 F).
\item[37] \textit{Ibid.} iii (V, pp. 199 - 221 F).
\item[38] \textit{Ibid.} iv (V, pp. 228 - 286 F).
\item[39] \textit{Ibid.} ix - x (V, pp. 459 - 507 F).
\item[40] \textit{Ibid.} xiv (VI, pp. 87-108 F).
\end{footnotes}
the unanimous testimony of Xenophon,\textsuperscript{41} Cornelius Nepos\textsuperscript{42} and Diodorus Siculus\textsuperscript{43} that Critias was killed in action.

At a less grand level we have the case of Lais:

'In Corinth there was a beautiful courtesan, Lais, attracting many lovers by her beauty. When as a result much of the youth was being corrupted, a citizen proposed that Lais should be expelled from the city. He carried the proposal. After this when there were many adulterers in the city and a standing law that one catching an adulterer in the act should kill him many suffered the penalty imposed by the law. So a citizen proposes the recall of Lais, and another opposes him. Let us practice the opposition case.'\textsuperscript{44}

Another kind of exercise is formed by the \textit{declamationes ethologicae}, in which a stock character is imagined in a situation. The first of these is the morose man married to a talkative wife who accuses himself before the people and demands that he be given a dose of hemlock for his folly in marrying.\textsuperscript{45}

Equally ingenious is the self-accusation of the parasite invited to dinner, who wishing to get there quickly hires a racehorse and reaches the house of his host. But there was an altar in front of the door of the courtyard, and the racehorse thinking the altar a turning-post wheeled around it and galloped off with the parasite. The parasite went without his dinner and on the following day preferred a charge against himself.\textsuperscript{46}

The miser is another favourite stock character. One declamation concerning him supposes a law that anyone finding a treasure should give 1000 drachmas to the city. The miser finds a treasure of 500 drachmas, and when called on to pay up 1000, asks to be put to death.\textsuperscript{47}

The more elementary exercises before the stage of declamation, which demonstrate how to tell a story and how to comment on a theme may be omitted except that in view of the importance already assigned to \textit{paedagogi}, one typical \textit{chria} may be mentioned:

'Diogenes seeing a youth misbehaving struck his \textit{paedagogus} remarking: 'Why do you train him like this?''\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} Xen. \textit{Hell.} II iv 19.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Nep. \textit{Thras.} 2.7.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Diod. xiv 33.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Lib. \textit{decl.} xxv (VI, pp. 467-92 F).
\item \textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid.} xxvi (VI, pp. 511-44 F).
\item \textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.} xxvii (VI, pp. 573-88 F).
\item \textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.} xxxi (VIII, pp. 7-37 F).
\item \textsuperscript{48} Id. \textit{chr.} 2 (VIII, pp. 74-82 F).
\end{itemize}
On this the students were expected to comment. But we have groups of eulogies (including one on Thersites), invectives (including one against Achilles) and comparisons of mythical and historical persons, qualities and occupations;\textsuperscript{49} character-studies of the type, ‘What would Medea say when about to slay her own children?’\textsuperscript{50} The unfailing ingenuity of the rhetoricians is shown in the study: ‘What would a painter say when painting an Apollo on a tablet of bay-wood which refused to take the paints?’\textsuperscript{51} The point here of course is that the bay was a metamorphosis of Daphne who had resisted Apollo’s advances. A related study perhaps is, ‘What would a reformed prostitute say?’\textsuperscript{52} Libanius’ model answer suggests that at least her first words would be, ‘To Hell with all procurers. No longer shall I sell myself to the first-comer for 2 or 3 obols’ — which may give food for thought to economic historians of the ancient world, although Tenney Frank seems interested only in the tax on prostitution in Roman Syria.\textsuperscript{53}

Another rhetorical exercise was the description of works of art, and Libanius has examples of this, too.\textsuperscript{54} The ancient thesis should be mentioned, although only one genuine one by Libanius seems to have survived, in which he asks, ‘Should one marry?’\textsuperscript{55} Whatever rhetoric demanded in the treatment of this theme, Libanius himself did not marry.

In all this great flood of words there is little or nothing to suggest any concern with the great issues of the 4th century or to prepare his pupils to deal with them, and yet the demand for relevance in studies is by no means a new one. Musonius centuries before Libanius had condemned a preoccupation with words alone:

‘I would claim that men should not abandon their proper tasks (ἐρίω ν) and concern themselves with arguments (λόγους) alone: but also whatever arguments they do consider, I say they should consider for the sake of their tasks. For just as there is no use in

\textsuperscript{49}. Ibid. VIII, 216 - 360 F.
\textsuperscript{50}. Ibid. ethop. 1 (VIII, pp. 372-6 F).
\textsuperscript{51}. Ibid. 11 (VIII, pp. 399 - 401 F).
\textsuperscript{52}. Ibid. 18 (VIII, pp. 414-6 F).
\textsuperscript{53}. ESAR iv 253. In the discussion following the reading of the original draft of this article at the General Meeting of the Australian Society for Classical Studies at the University of Sydney in August 1971, Dr J.R. Jones drew attention to the unreality of Attic obols in 4th century Antioch.
\textsuperscript{54}. Lib. VIII, pp. 460-546.
\textsuperscript{55}. Ibid. 550-61 F.
a medical argument, unless it conduces to the health of the human body, so not even if a philosopher has or teaches a particular argument, is there any use in it, unless it conduces to the virtue of the human soul.\textsuperscript{56}

In the passage quoted Musonius was arguing the case for higher education for women and combating the view that women philosophers would be a useless nuisance and spend all their time in the company of men arguing and working out syllogisms instead of staying at home and getting on with their wool-work. Musonius' view is that not even men can be forgiven if their devotion to λόγος makes them useless citizens. In any case, the best rhetorical precept on the acquiring of skill with words is surely the laconic dictum of Cato the Censor, who would have had nothing but contempt for any rhetorician -- rem tene, verba sequentur.\textsuperscript{57}

But Libanius devotes his verbal skill to subjects that are trivial or irrelevant or both, and it is hard not to feel some sympathy for his bored and inattentive pupils.

It is true that Libanius was a friend of the Emperor Julian and sympathized with his attempt to revive all that was excellent in the great traditions of Greece and Rome, and his shock and grief on receiving the news of the death of Julian was genuine and profound, and what he wrote then is still moving\textsuperscript{58} in a way that perhaps nothing else he wrote could be. Here at any rate he shows the truth of Cato's dictum.

However, although he was perhaps in correspondence with St. Basil and the correspondence attributed to them survives, he shows no awareness of what the great issue of the 4th century was, and that surely was whether the long tradition of fearless independent thinking established by the Greek sophists in the 5th century B.C. was to continue, and the great works of Greek and Latin literature and philosophy were to continue to be the inspiration of the system of education, or whether all this was to give way before the authoritarian fantasies of theologians supported by a state-imposed religion devoted to the study of sacred texts written in a barbarous style in the Greek and Latin versions then available and conveying the teachings of men who had followed banastic occupations.

St. Augustine and St. Basil who had been brought up in the old

\textsuperscript{56} Stobaeus II xxxi 126 (= p. 246.19-26 Wachsmuth).

\textsuperscript{57} M. Catonis praeter Librum de Re Rustica quae extant, ed. H. Jordan, p. 80.2.

\textsuperscript{58} Lib.orr. xvii-xviii (II, pp. 206-21, 236 - 371 F).
traditions deliberately made the act of self-sacrifice involved in abandoning the Classics for the barbarous style of the scriptures, and St. Augustine has something to confess on his early reluctance to undertake the study of such barbarous writings. It was inevitable that the content and *auctoritas* of the Bible should prevail over the ‘fine writing’ of the rhetorical schools which in their superficial treatment of trivial themes were wholly comparable with modern television. For the scriptures had, as St. Basil said, ῥνη μὲν ἄληδη, λεξά> ἡ αμαδη.69

The surprising thing is the completeness of this change, and the readiness of men brought up in the liberal atmosphere of the Classics to impose their views in a most authoritarian way. It never occurred to St. Augustine that in the more than eighty heresies he lists60 there might have been some truth in views other than his own. Moreover, it is surprising to find one trained in the critical study of the classical texts urging St Jerome to leave well alone and not attempt an improved Latin version of the Bible by direct reference to the Hebrew and Aramaic originals.61 At least one can admire St. Jerome’s refusal to be swayed by this and his determination to learn two difficult languages to carry out his scholarly purpose.

But such independence was rare and was to become dangerous for those who rejected the views of the authorities. And Musonius’ plea for even philosophers to play a responsible part in the life of their communities was disregarded, as Christian ascetics with a whole-hearted concern for saving their own souls for another world remained, at least in the Western Empire, indifferent to the duties of citizens in this world and to the successive stages in the collapse of the Western Empire.62 Even the sack of Rome left St. Augustine unmoved.63

A protest was eventually to come, but too late to affect the course of history. In the 6th century Procopius, when dismissing as


61. *Id.* *Ep.* xxviii. 2.


unworthy of record some theological arguments which he knew well, had the courage to write:

‘For I consider it demented folly to investigate what may be the nature of god. For I think that for a man not even human affairs can be comprehended exactly, far less those concerning the nature of god . . . For I would not say anything about god except that he is good in all respects and has everything in his power. Let each man, both priest and layman, express his views on these matters.’

This eminently rational point of view had been expressed a thousand years earlier by Confucius, when he was asked by Chi Lu about serving the spirits. Confucius replied, ‘While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve spirits?’ Chi Lu added, ‘I venture to ask about death?’ He was answered, ‘While you do not know life, how can you know about death?’ (Transl. J. Legge).

There is nothing to suggest that Libanius’ pupils were prepared for either approach. Their teacher was merely passing on a classical education of the kind that he had received himself without any critical thinking about the values or purposes of that education.

His preoccupation with Demosthenes is undoubtedly a worthy occupation for a professional scholar, but were the complexities of the politics of 4th century city-states relevant to the problems of the youth of the 4th century A.D. living under a world empire with a system of law developed to include considerations of equity which went far beyond anything the Greeks achieved? How unreal and irrelevant the law of the tyrannicides and damsels in distress must have seemed against the real achievement of the Civil Law. Homer remains one of the world’s great works of literature, but how relevant was the practice of playing the part of Menelaus or Odysseus, in a world shaken by a subversive new doctrine which found no place in the traditional syllabus? There is nothing in Libanius with the lasting relevance and value of Quintilian. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Libanius’ pupils became restive.

65. Analects XI xi. For the same rational approach in the same tradition, cf. Mencius V i 5, ‘Heaven does not speak. It simply indicated its will by his (the emperor’s) personal conduct and his conduct of affairs’; and VII ii 14.1, ‘The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest’. (Translations by J. Legge).
There seems no reason to doubt the continuing relevance of the Greek and Latin Classics, although the Sanskrit Epics and Manu might better prepare one for life in the modern world than Homer's memories of the Heroic Age or Demosthenes' concerns with 4th century politics, since the Hindus insist on the need to do one's duty rather than assert one's rights; but perhaps each generation of teachers should consider the relevance of the aspects of the Classics that he teaches and the manner in which he does so.