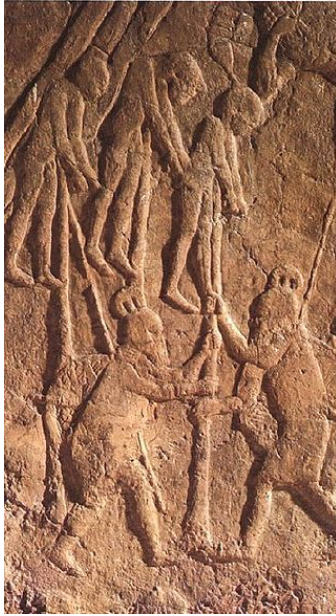


ACL 2018 The Romans No One Sees or Overlooked Aspects of Well-known Romans

Militant Romans, Engineering Romans, Governing Romans, Decadent Romans. We are all too familiar with these images. But Romans ruled a significant part of the world for a thousand years. No savage dictatorship can survive that long: someone will manage an overthrow it. Romans survived because of characteristics other than those above. Clues to the character of a people can be found in the art and decorations they used.



Assyrian art shows that its creators had savage tastes in decoration.



On the left are people being impaled; on the right someone is being stabbed in the neck.



It is hard to imagine the person who would want to decorate with this. The Assyrian empire was confined to a small area between Babylonia and the Hittites and lasted only 300 years before desperate people banded together and made an end to it.



This is Roman art from *Ara Pacis*.



Pax was elevated to major status as a goddess by Augustus and he had this erected.



Roman homes were often decorated with scenes such as this. Contrast this with the art favored by the Assyrians.

Today we want to read some passages showing some overlooked attitudes of well-known Romans whose wealth and position gave them immense power over many people.

We are moving backward through classical Roman history, looking at an emperor, a provincial governor, a philosopher and emperor's advisor, and another governor. Their concern for people over whom they had authority is clear. Each of the passages will be given first in Latin and then in English. Less common Latin words are glossed.

Antoninus Pius 86- 161 Emperor 138-161 CE



Adopted son of Hadrian and adoptive father of Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus was a worthy descendant of the senatorial family of the Aurelii Fulvii. He was too good a man to attract the attention of Hollywood, so you may not have heard of him. An examination of his life hardly sounds like the stereotype of a Roman emperor. He was unimpressed with the baubles that tempt most men, and was simply concerned, of all things, with doing a good job and caring for his country and its inhabitants.

from *Historia Augusta* Life of Antoninus Pius

9 Fuit quaestor liberālis, praetor splendidus, cōsul cum Catiliō Sevērō. 10 Hic in omnī vitā suā privāta in agrīs frequentissimē vixit, sed clārus in locīs omnibus fuit. 11 Ab Hadriānō inter quattuor cōsulārēs, quibus Ītalia committēbātur, ēlēctus est ad eam partem Ītaliae regendam, in quā plūrimum possidēbat, ut Hadriānus virī tālis et honōrī cōsuleret et quiētī.

9 As quaestor he was generous, as praetor illustrious, consul with Catilius Severus. 10 In private life he lived mostly on his estates but he was well-known everywhere. 11 He was chosen by Hadrian from among the four men of consular rank to whom Italy was entrusted, for ruling that particular part of Italy in which he (Hadrian) possessed many holdings; so that Hadrian might have the advice of such a quiet and honorable man.

Prōcūrātōrēs suōs et modestē suscipere tribūta iussit et excēdentēs modum ratiōnem factōrum suōrum reddere praecēpit/ nec umquam ūllō laetus est lucrō, quō prōvinciālis oppressus est. 2 Contrā prōcūrātōrēs suōs conquerentēs libenter audīvit.

3 *Hīs, quōs Hadriānus damnāverat, in senātū indulgentiās petit dīcēns etiam ipsum Hadriānum hōc fuisse factūrum.* **4** *Imperātōrium fastīgium ad summam civilitātem dēdūxit ; unde plūs crēvit ...* **5** *Senātūi tantum dētulit imperātor, quantum, cum prīvātus esset, dēferri sibi ab aliō prīncipe optāvit.* **6** *Patris patriae nōmen dēlātum ā senātū, quod prīmō distulerat, cum ingentī grātiārum āctiōne suscēpit.*

Vocabulary

fastigi•um –ī *n* elevation, splendor

civilit•tās -tatis *f* citizen status

His procurators were ordered to levy only a modest tribute, and those exceeding this limit he commanded to render an account of their acts, nor was he ever pleased with any revenues by which the provinces were oppressed. 2 He freely heard complaints against his procurators. 3 For those whom Hadrian had condemned Antoninus sought pardons in the senate, saying that Hadrian himself had been about to do this. 4 The splendor of emperors he reduced to high citizen status, from (because of) which he became more esteemed. 5 He as emperor granted the same respect to the senate that he had wished another emperor to grant to him when he was a private man. 6 Offered the title of Father of his Country by the senate, he at first refused it, but later accepted it with a great expression of thanks.

VII. 1 *Tanta sānē dīligentiā subiectōs sibi populōs rēxit, ut omnia et omnēs, quasi sua essent, cūrāret. Prōvinciae sub eō cūnctae flōru/ērunt.* **2** *Quadrup/lātōrēs extīnctī sunt.* **3** *Pūblicātiō bonōrum rārior quam umquam fuit, ita ut ūnus tantum prōscrīberētur affectātae tyrannidis reus.*

Vocabulary

affectat•us -a - um *adj* having aspired

tyrannis tyrannidis *f* rulership

7 1 He ruled all peoples with such care that he cared for all things and all men as if they were his own. All the provinces prospered under him 2 informers were abolished, 3 the confiscation of goods was rarer than ever before, and only one man was condemned as guilty of aspiring to the highest power.

5 *Victus Antōnīnī Pīi tālis fuit, ut esset opulentia sine reprehēnsiōne, parsimōniā sine sordibus, et mēnsā eius per propriōs servōs, propriōs aucupēs, piscātōrēs ac vēnātōrēs instruerētur.* **6** *Balneum, quō ūsus fuisset, sine mercēde populō exhibuit nec omnīnō quicquam dē vītāe prīvātae quālitāte mūtāvit.*

Vocabulary

vict•us –ī *m* way of living, food

sordid•us -a - um *adj* cheap, stingy

auceps aucupis *m* fowler, bird hunter

5 The way of life of Antoninus Pius was rich without being blameworthy, frugal without being stingy; his table was furnished by his own slaves, his own fowlers and fishers and hunters. 6 A bath, which he had previously used himself, he opened to the people

without charge, nor did he change in any way his manner of life from his life as a private man.

8. 11. *Vīnī, oleī et trīticī pēnūriam per aerāriī suī damna ēmendō et grātīs populō dandō sēdāvīt.*

Vocabulary

trītic•um –ī *n* wheat

sedō 1 to settle, remedy

. 11 He took care of a scarcity of wine, oil and wheat through loss to his own private treasury, by buying these and giving them free to the people.

Pliny the Younger (61 – c. 113 CE)



Pliny the Younger was reared and educated by his uncle, Pliny the Elder, Roman naval commander and friend of the Emperor Vespasian. Pliny's personal letters to friends and associates give a unique insight into his Rome and into his personality. Here we learn of his building a school in his hometown, although he did not live there and had no children. He took care of his slaves, both those in service and those retired, when they had needs. He lived frugally and had little patience with ostentation. In 110 CE the harassed Emperor Trajan sent him as Imperial Governor

(*Legatus Augusti*) to govern the obstreperous province of Bithynia. Sighing because he had not yet reached the years of retirement, Pliny strove to govern well, rooting out corruption and providing for the people's needs. We will look at some of his short letters, first about personal concerns and then about his governing concerns.

***Epistlae* Book VI. 3 The Old Nurse's Gift**

Nurses to high-born children were usually good-tempered and fairly well educated slaves. Children often had great affection for them. Slaves could accumulate savings (*peculium*) to buy freedom or receive it from their masters for good service (*manūmissiō*). This lady was rewarded with freedom and a little farm. It is tempting to think that he wrote this letter to a friend at home while he was Imperial Magistrate of Bithynia, but we can't prove it.

C. Plinius / Vērō suō salutem dicit. Grātiās agō, quod agellum quem nūtrīcī meae dōnāveram colendum suscēpistī. Erat, cum dōnārem, centum milium nummum; postea dēcrēscēte reditū etiam pretium minuit, quod nunc tē cūrante reparābit. Tū modo meminerīs commendārī tibi a mē nōn arborēs et terram, quamquam haec quoque, sed mūnusculum meum, quod esse quam frūctuōsissimum nōn illius magis interest quae accēpit, quam mea qui dēdī. Valē.

Vocabulary

agell•um –ī *n* little field

mūnuscul•um –ī *n* little gift

numm•us –ī *m*; *gen* nummum small silver coin

nūtrīx nūtrīcīs *f* nurse

Gaius Plinius sends greeting to Verus. I thank you because you have undertaken caring for the little farm which I gave to my nurse. When I gave it, it was worth one hundred thousand coins; afterwards with decreasing returns even the price diminished, which now, with you taking care of it, will recover. Only remember that I have entrusted to you not only trees and land, although that also, but my little gift. That it may be as fruitful as possible is not more to the interest of that one who received it than to the interest of the one who gave it. Farewell.

Epistulae X.37 Nicomedia Needs Water

As governor of Bithynia, Pliny faces a thorny problem. The city of Nicomedia desperately needs water, but funds the Roman government has sent for that need have been squandered and the city is still thirsty.

Amounts of money are very hard to put in modern terms, given the fluidity of all currency values. In any case this was a great deal of money. But however feckless the Nicomedians may be, Pliny knows that the city needs a reliable source of water, and takes steps for supplying it, subject to Trajan's approval.

C. Plinius / Traiānō Imperātōrī. In aquaeductum, domine, Nīcomēdēnsēs impendērunt HS [XXX] {CCCXVIII}, tres decies centena milia/ tres centum, viginti octo sesterces quī imperfectus adhūc omissus, dēstrūctus etiam est; rūsus in alium ductum ērogāta sunt {CC} ducenta milia. Hōc quoque relictō/ novō impendiō est opus, ut aquam habeant, quī tantam pecūniā male perdidērunt. Ipse pervēnī ad fontem pūrissimum, ex quō vidētur aqua dēbēre perdūcī, sicut initiō temptātum erat, arcuātō opere, nē tantum ad plānā cīvītātis et humilia perveniat. Manent adhūc paucissimī arcūs: possunt et ērigī quīdam lapide quadrātō, quī ex superiōre opere dētractus est; aliquā pars, ut mihi vidētur, testācēō opere agenda erit, id enim et facilius et vīlius. Sed in prīmīs necessārium est mittī ā tē vel aquilegem vel architectum, nē rūsus ēveniat quod accidit. Ego illud ūnum affirmō, et ūtilitātem operis et pulchritūdinem saeculō tuō esse dignissimam.

Vocabulary

sicut *conj* just as

arcuat•us -a - um *adj* arched, curved, made of arches

quadrāt•us -a - um *adj* square

aquil•ex -egis *m* water inspector, engineer

Gaius Pliny to the Emperor Trajan. The citizens of Nicomedia, Sir, have spent three million, three hundred and twenty-eight thousand sesterces upon an aqueduct, which, left unfinished up to now, is already fallen to ruin. Again on another structure they spent two hundred thousand. This one also having been abandoned, there is need for a new expenditure in order that they, who wasted so much money so badly, may have water. I myself have found a very pure spring from which it appears water should be able to be brought, just as was attempted in the beginning, over arched work in such a manner that not only to the level parts but (as well) to the lower parts of the city water may arrive. There remain still a very few arches; and indeed (more) can be made from the square stones drawn from the earlier work. It seems to me another part should be raised with brick, for that is easier and cheaper. But first it is necessary that an engineer or architect be sent here by you, so that what happened before will not occur again. I will promise one thing, that the beauty and usefulness of the design will be very worthy of your reign.

Epistulae X.38 Trajan Agrees Nicomedia Needs Water, but Has Stipulations



Notes: Trajan's first concern is water for a needy city. His second is the need to discover how they managed to waste so much money. He obviously thinks there has been graft, and wants Pliny to root it out.

Traianus Pliniō. Cūrandum est, ut aqua in Nicomedēsem civitātem perdūcātur. Vērē crēdō tē eā, quā dēbēbis, dīligentiā hoc opus aggressūrum. Sed medius fīdius ad eandem dīligentiā tuam pertinet inquīrere, quōrum vitiō ad hoc tempus tantam pecūniā Nīcomēdēsēs perdiderint, nē, dum inter sē grātificantur, et incohāverint aquaeductūs et reliquerint. Quid itaque compererīs, perfer in nōtitiā meam.

Vocabulary

aggred•ior -dī aggressus *dep* to approach, attack

medius fīdius for **Meus Deus Fidius** *an exclamation or mild swear word by the gods!*

pertin•eō – ēre –uī to reach, pertain to, belong to
grātific•or –ārī –ātus *dep* to gratify, do favors
incoh•ō (1) to begin
perfer•ō -re pertulī perlātum to bring (to)

Trajan to Pliny. Care must be taken that water be led into the city of Nicomedia, Truly I believe that you are going to approach that task with all the diligence you ought (to use). But (by) the gods! it is pertinent to investigate with that same diligence of yours by whose misconduct the Nicomedians have wasted so much money up to this time, lest, while indulging themselves, they (go on) beginning and abandoning aqueducts. And what you find out, refer to my notice.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4 BCE–65 CE)



Seneca the Younger was the son of Seneca the Elder and the uncle of the poet Lucan. A Stoic philosopher, statesman and dramatist, he was tutor and later the advisor of the Emperor Nero. He exercised a good influence on Nero for a number of years. As Nero's mental health gradually deteriorated, Seneca was forced to commit suicide for alleged complicity in Piso's attempt to assassinate Nero. His views in his philosophical works led to a legend that he was a correspondent of the Apostle Paul.

Seneca expresses great pleasure about his friend's treatment of his slaves as human beings. He discusses in this letter some of the humiliating treatment to which some slaves are subjected. He gives evidence that the early Romans treated slaves more honorably.

Moral Letters I.47 On Slaves

Libenter ex eīs, quī ā tē veniunt, cognōvī familiārīter tē cum servīs tuīs vīvere. Hoc prūdentiam ēruditiōnem decet. “Servī sunt.” Immō hominēs. “Servī sunt.” Immō contubernālēs. Servī sunt.” Immō humilēs amīcī. “Servī sunt.” Immō cōservī, sī cōgitāverīs tantundem in utrōsque licēre fortūnae. Deinde eiusdem arrogantiae prōverbium iactātur, totidem hostēs esse quot servōs. Nōn habēmus illōs hostēs, sed facimus.

Vīs tū cōgitāre istum, quem servum tuum vocās, ex īsdem sēminibus ortum eōdem fruī caelō, aequē spirāre, aequē vīvere, aequē mōrī! Tam tū illum vidēre ingenuum potes quam ille tē servum. Vivē cum servō clēmēter, cōmiter quoque, et in sermōnem illum admitte et in cōsiliū et in convictum. Hōc locō adclāmābit mihi tōta manus dēlicātōrum: “Nihil hāc rē humilius, nihil turpius est.”
Vocabulary

cōmiter *adv* socially, in a comradely manner
cōserv•us -ī *m* fellow slave

contubernāl•is -is *m* tent companion, fellow being
dēlicāt•us -a - um *adj* dainty, pampered
ērudīti•ō -onis *f* learning, understanding
familiārīter *adv* in a family manner, easily
libenter *adv* gladly

Gladly I learned, from those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This is fitting for your good sense and your learning. "They are slaves," (people declare). On the contrary, they are men. " They are slaves!" On the contrary, they are fellow beings. "They are slaves!" On the contrary, they are humble friends. "They are slaves!" On the contrary, they are our fellow-slaves, if you reflect that just as much power is granted to Fortune over both us and them. Finally, this saying is thrown to (alludes to) this same arrogance, "As many enemies as you have slaves." We do not have those enemies, but we make them.

You want to remember (think) that man whom you call your slave, having sprung from the same stock, enjoys the same skies, equally (with yourself) breathes, lives, and dies. So you are as able to picture (see) him as a free-born man as he (is able to see) you as a slave.

Live with your slave kindly, even sociably; let him talk with you, plan with you, socialize with you. At this point the band of all the pampered will cry out against me; they will say: "There is nothing lower, more disgraceful, than this."

Nē illud quidem vidētis, quam omnem invidiam maiōrēs nostrī dominīs, omnem contumēliam servīs dētrāxerint? Dominum patrem familiae appellāvērunt, servōs, quod etiam adhūc dūrat, familiārēs. Īstituērunt diem fēstum, nōn quō solō cum servīs dominī vēscentur, sed quō utique; honōrēs illīs in domō gerere, iūs dīcere permīsērunt et domum pusillam rem pūblicam esse iūdicāvērunt.

Vocabulary

contumēli•a -ae *f* insult
fēst•us -a - um *adj* festive
invidi•a -ae *f* spite
pusill•a -ae *f* tiny, little
utique *adv* in particular, especially
vēsc•or - ī *dep w abl* to eat

Indeed do you not see that our ancestors removed all spite from the masters, all insults from the slaves? They called the master "father of the family," and the slaves, (they called) "family members" which (custom) endures up to this day They established a festal day (the Saturnalia) when slaves might eat with their masters, not (on that day) only, but on that one especially; / they permitted slaves to hold offices (official duties) and to say (give) judgments in the home, and they considered the home a tiny republic.

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BCE –43 BCE)



Roman politician and lawyer, consul, one of Rome's greatest orators. His influence on language not only in Latin but also in other European languages, was immense. Literature since his time has largely been either a return to or a reaction against his style. During the harsh and turbulent years which led to Caesar's dictatorship and the chaotic times which followed it, Cicero championed traditional republican government. He lost his life battling Antony's attempt to become Caesar's successor. We have 37 books of Cicero's letters which are a major source of information about the people and events of his time.

Ad Atticum 5.16

After his year of consulship, as was customary, Cicero was assigned a governorship of a province, in his case Cilicia in Asia Minor. Publius Cornelius Lentulus had governed well there, but after him the unfortunate province got one of the worst of the Appii Claudii. This letter was written to Cicero's friend Atticus shortly after he arrived there to replace Claudius.

Julius Caesar had enacted some pretty stringent restrictions on what governors could demand from provincials, but Cicero wrote that he had not taken even such necessities as the Julian law allowed a governor to receive.

quid quaeris? taedet omninō eōs vītae. levantur tamen miserae civitatēs quod nūllus fit sūmptūs in nōs neque in lēgātōs neque in quaestōrem neque in quemquam. scītō nōn modo nōs faenum aut quod ē lēge lūliā darī solet nōn accipere sed nē ligna quidem, nec praeter quattuor lectōs et tēctum quemquam accipere quicquam, multīs locīs nē tēctum quidem et in tabernāculō manēre plērumque. itaque incrēdibilem in modum concursūs fiunt ex agrīs, ex vicīs, ex domibus omnibus. mē hercule etiam adventū nostrō revivīscunt. iūstitiā, abstinentiā, clēmētiā tuī Cicerōnis [itaque] opīniōnēs omnium superāvīt.

Vocabulary

faen•um –ī n hay

revivīsc•ō -ere revīxī to be revived, recover

What (is the situation) you ask? their lives altogether weary them. Nevertheless, the wretched towns are somewhat relieved because expense was made neither on my legates, nor quaestor, nor anyone. Know that not only have we not accepted hay, nor anything which is accustomed to be given under the Julian law, but not even firewood, or anything else, except four beds and a roof to cover us; in many districts we do not accept even a roof, but generally stay in tents. Therefore, crowds in unbelievable numbers come from farms, villages, from all dwellings. By Hercules, by our arrival they were revived, as the justice, restraint, and kindness of your Cicero has far surpassed everyone's hopes.

Ad Quintum 1.1 Section 73

Cicero's brother Quintus had just completed a term of office as governor or propraetor of the Province of Phrygia or Asia, and was disappointed at being re-appointed. Cicero sympathizes, but says that he has served well and will continue to do so.

. quid autem reperiri tam eximium aut tam expetendum potest, quam istam virtutem, moderatiōnem animi, temperantiam nōn latere in tenebris neque esse abditam, sed in luce Asiae, in oculis clarissimae provinciae atque in auribus omnium gentium ac natiōnum esse positam? nōn itineribus tuis perterreri hominēs, nōn sūmptū exhauriri, nōn adventū commoveri? esse, quocumque veneris, et publice et privatim maximam laetitiam, cum urbs custodem, nōn tyrannum, domus hospitem, nōn expilatōrem recepisse videatur? III. 10. His autem in rebus iam tē usus ipse profectō eruditiv nēquāquam satis esse ipsum hās tē habere virtutēs, sed esse circumspiciendum diligenter, ut in hāc custodiā provinciae nōn tē unum, sed omnēs ministrōs imperii tui sociis et civibus et rei publicae praestare videāre.

*What can be found so striking or so desirable as that virtue, moderation of spirit, temperance such as yours, (should) be not obscured in shadows and hidden, but set out in the broad daylight of Asia, before the eyes of a very famous province, and in the hearing of all nations and races? That by your travels men have not been terrorized, not drained by your expenses, not agitated by your arrival? Rather to be wherever **you** come is the very great joy, public and private, since the city seems to have received a guardian, not a tyrant, the private home a guest and not a plunderer? However in these matters already **experience itself** has taught you that it is by no means enough to have these virtues yourself, but (it has to be watched) with diligent vigilance, in order that in the guardianship of the province you see not just **you alone** but **all** ministers of your rule to be responsible to the allies, the citizens, and the state.*

So we have here a sampling of thoughtful caring Romans exercising great power with care and kindness. Of course such things will never be the subject of films.

Now let's consider how the passages might be used in classes. The selections emphasize the sense of responsibility of men of power, both slave owners and provincial governors.

One way to work material such as this is by placing words that may be more familiar to your students above some that may not be. Here is our last literature passage so treated.

Ad Quintum 1.1 Section 73

res inveniri bonum desiderabilem illam
. quid/ autem reperiri tam eximium aut tam expetendum potest, quam istam
iacere
virtutem, moderatiōnem animi, temperantiam nōn latere in tenebris neque esse
occultam
abditam, sed in luce Asiae, in oculis clarissimae provinciae atque in auribus

clamatam

omnium gentium ac nātiōnum esse positam? nōn itineribus tuīs perterrēri
debito timēri

hominēs, nōn sūmptū exhaurīri, nōn adventū commovēri? esse, quōcumque
gaudium

vēnerīs, et pūblicē et prīvātim maximam laetitiam, cum urbs cūstōdem, nōn
raptorem, furem

tyrannum, domus hospitem, nōn expilātōrem recēpisse videātur? III. 10. Hīs
experientiam vero

autem in rēbus iam tē ūsus ipse profectō ērudīvit nēquāquam satis esse ipsum

hās tē habēre virtūtēs, sed esse circumspiciendum dīligenter, ut in hāc

cūstōdiā prōvinciae nōn tē ūnum, sed omnēs ministrōs imperīi tuī sociīs et

cīvibus et rēi pūblicae praestāre videāre.

Other Latin passages to examine

Pliny on attending a snob's banquet *Epistulae II.6*

Pliny on his ailing slave Zozimus *Epistulae V.19*

Pliny on Bithynia *Epistulae X*

Seneca *Moral Epistles I.47*

Cicero helping provincials *Ad Atticum V.21, Ad Atticum VI.2*

Cicero to Tiro *Ad Familiares XVI.13, 14, 15*