

How to persuade an Emperor
040.643, Spring 2011
Mondays 2:30-5:00, Gilman 108
Professor Matthew Roller

This seminar is built around readings of Seneca's *De Clementia* and Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus*—in both cases, texts with the primary or proximate aim of persuading the emperor to behave in certain ways and not in others. In the first six weeks of the semester, particular themes or questions are introduced that provide broad frameworks for addressing the matter of “persuading an emperor.” Each theme has a body of theoretical or comparative work behind it, some pertaining to ancient Rome and some to other cultures and periods. By mid-semester, following the introduction of these frameworks, each student will choose a paper topic. In the second half of the semester, weekly readings of the Latin texts will continue, and in each meeting each student will present a 5-10 minute summary of how her or his research has progressed since the previous meeting, to be commented on by other students and faculty. The final paper is due at the end of the semester.

Required books for this course are available in the Johns Hopkins Book Center. They are Basore's Loeb edition of the Senecan treatises including *De Clementia*, and Radice's Loeb edition of the volume of Pliny the Younger containing the *Panegyricus*. These are the only editions of these authors that are readily available, affordable, and reasonably scholarly. The translation is also very helpful. Other studies, commentaries, and similar resources will be available in the Classics Course Reserves in the Library.

Weekly assignments are as follows. The readings given on each date are to be prepared for that date, and will be discussed in that seminar meeting.

Jan. 31: Introduction to seminar; sight reading of Sen. *Clem.* 1.

Feb. 7: Introduction to *De Clementia*

Primary reading, in Latin: Sen. *Clem.* 1.1-6

Secondary readings: S. Braund 2009, pp. 1-91 (“introduction”)

Feb. 14: Speaking to Power

Primary reading, in Latin: Sen. *Clem.* 1.7-12. Also Plut. *Mor.* 47-74, “How to tell a flatterer from a friend” (in translation)

Secondary readings: J. Scott 1990, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Chs. 1 and 6; F. Ahl, “Art of Safe Criticism”, *AJP* 105 (1984) 174-208 (JSTOR); D. Konstan 1997, *Friendship in the Classical World*, selections discussing friendship and flattery

Feb. 21: Metaphors for imperial authority

Primary reading, in Latin: Sen. *Clem.* 1.13-19

Secondary readings: M. Roller 2001, 213-64; T. Stevenson 1992 "The ideal benefactor and the father analogy in Greek and Roman Thought," *CQ* 42: 421-36 (JSTOR); E. Dickey 2002, *Latin Forms of Address*, 77-109
Also of interest: parallel selections from Seneca's *De Beneficiis* and *de Ira* (to be distributed in class)

Feb. 28: "Courts" and court society in antiquity

Primary reading, in Latin: Sen. *Clem.* 1.20-26

Secondary readings: A. Winterling 2009, *Politics and Society in Imperial Rome*, ch. 5 ("A court without 'State:' the *aula Caesaris*"), J. Paterson 2007, "Friends in High Places: the creation of the court of the Roman Emperor," in A. Spawforth, ed., *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies*, 121-56; A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Imperial Court," in *Cambridge Ancient History*² vol. 10: 283-308

Also of interest: J. A. Crook, *Consilium Principis* (1955); A. Winterling, *Aula Caesaris* (1999); A. Winterling ed., 1997, *Zwischen Haus und Staat: Antike Höfe im Vergleich*

March 7: Virtue language

Primary reading, in Latin: Sen. *Clem.* 2.1-7

Secondary readings: D. Konstan 2005, "Clemency as a Virtue," *CP* 100: 337-46 (JSTOR); C. Noreña, "The communication of the Emperor's virtues," *JRS* 2001: 146-68 (JSTOR); selections from M. Dowling 2006, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World*

March 14: Overview of Pliny's *Panegyricus*

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 1-6

Secondary readings: S. Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, chapter on Pliny; S. Hoffer, "Divine comedy?," *JRS* 96 (2006) 73-87 (JSTOR); M. Charles, "Calvus Nero: Domitian and the mechanics of predecessor denigration," *Acta Classica* 45 (2002) 19-49; G. Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 214-96

March 21: Spring Break—no seminar meeting

March 28: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 7-12

April 4: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 13-20

April 11: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 21-30

April 18: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 31-40

April 25: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 41-50

May 2: Student research updates

Primary reading: Pliny, *Paneg.* 51-60