

Horace's *Epistles* formed a part of the intellectual legacy of Peter Ramus (1515-72), called “the most innovative and iconoclastic pedagogical tradition to emerge in the latter sixteenth century and to sweep throughout the international Reformed world” (Hotson 2007) and one which was carried across the Atlantic to provide the foundation for education in New England (Miller 1939). Claude Mignault (ca. 1536-1606), a follower of Ramus, applied his interpretive method to Horace's paraenetic and didactic verses in an edition of 1584. This paper explores some of the ways in which *Epistles* 1 was attractive and adaptable to the Ramist method, which, stemming from the interaction of humanism and scholasticism, systematized all knowledge in a text to emphasize the application of theory to practice (Ong 1958). This paper illustrates how Mignault applied the principles of dialectic, characteristic of Ramism, to Horace's verses, thereby instructing his students how they were to compartmentalize Horace's material in their minds so that they could easily select material for future use as active and well-trained young men in society.

Two particular approaches exemplify Mignault's technique. At the beginning of his commentary on *Epistles* 1, Mignault immediately identifies the *ratiocinatio* (reasoning by asking questions), which is the first of Ramus' three types of judgment, in *Epistle* 1.1: *Senex omissis rebus ludicris Philosophiam debet excolere: Horatius iam senex est: Debet ergo Philosophiam excolere*. Before his reader can even begin to read both text and commentary, Mignault has already oriented his thought process so that he will understand the entire epistle with this tripartite logical framework in mind. According to Mignault's Ramist approach, Horace focuses on philosophy in this epistle only because he is an old man, and it is the duty of an old man to put aside more playful enterprises (*ludicris*) in order to focus solely on the study of philosophy. It is exactly that kind of general statement, expressed in the *ratiocinatio*, that the reader would take away for use in his future endeavors.

Another approach involves Mignault's division of *Epistle* 1.1 into four further distinct arguments that emphasize for his readers that (1) an old man ought to distance himself from any light pursuits; (2) there is *utilitas* in philosophy; (3) philosophy supplies effective remedies for diseases of the mind; and (4) philosophy is beneficial since it involves freedom from pain. This type of quick division is easily exportable and reproducible for the use of Mignault's readers. Manuscript annotations from Mignault's earlier lectures on Horace's *Odes* 3.1 reveal that Horace's lyric poetry met a similar fate (Grafton 1981). But Horace's *Epistles*, where we find an older Horace, now in his early to mid-40's, discussing both *libertas* through dialectic (Johnson 1993) and didacticism (Morrison 2007), became solidified in a printed commentary from Mignault, while his notes on the *Odes* did not disseminate as widely. This paper supplies examples that demonstrate this innovative form of Renaissance learning, integrating Horace's own first-century B.C.E. advice for young men in the Empire.