

**Age Ain't Nuthin' But A Number Except When It Isn't:
Cicero and the Problem of Youth in the *Philippics***

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1. *De Senectute* 2

Now, however, I have decided to compose something about old age that I'll dedicate to you, because I want both you and I to be relieved of this burdensome old age which we share, which is already oppressing us, or at least will be soon.

2. *Ad Atticum* 14.9.2 (19 April 44) and *Ad Familiares* 12.1.1 (3 May 44)

It would have been better to have perished when that man was killed, which never would have happened, than to see things as they are now.

As the matter stands up to this point, we seem to have been freed from the king but not the kingship.

3. *De Senectute* 17

Great things are accomplished neither by the strength nor the speed nor the nimbleness of bodies, but by good judgment (*consilium*), prestige (*auctoritas*), and perception (*sententia*), qualities in which old age (*senectus*) is not usually poorer, but is, in fact, actually richer.

4. *De Senectute* 20

But if indeed you should either read or hear histories of foreign lands, you will discover that even the greatest states have been ruined by young men (*ab adolescentibus labefactatas*) and have been restored and preserved by old men (*a senibus sustentatas et restitutas*)....for truly rashness (*temeritas*) belongs to youth, prudence (*prudentia*) to old age.

5. *Philippic* 2.16 (late 44)

For when the Senate came together in this same temple, which Roman knight, which noble youth except you (*quis praeter te adolescens nobilis*), which member of any order who remembered that he was a citizen of Rome was not there on the Capitoline slope and did not volunteer himself?

6. *Philippics* 2.52 (late 44)

What was being done by the Senate either factiously or thoughtlessly by the Senate when you, one single immature kid (*unus adolescens*) prevented the entire order from making decisions about the safety of the State?

7. *Philippics* 2.86 (late 44)

But you were even seeking pity – you threw yourself at Caesar's feet like a suppliant! What were you seeking? That you should be his slave? You ought to have sought this for only yourself, you who have lived in such a fashion from boyhood that you were able to endure anything and were easily able to be a slave (*qui ita a puero vixeras ut omnia paterere, ut facile servires*); you certainly did not have such a mandate from either me or the Roman people!

8. *De Senectute* 7

But fault for all of the complaints of this sort lies in a person's character, not their age (*in moribus est culpa, non in aetate*). For because of temperance (*moderatio*) old men who are neither obstinate nor uncultured are able to bear their old age, but insolence and cruelty (*importunitas autem et inhumanitas*) proves burdensome at every stage of life.

9. *Philippic* 3.5 (20 December 44)

For it is my feeling, indeed my belief, that unless this young man (*unus adulescens*) had restrained the attacks and most vicious undertakings of that bedlamite (*ille furens*), then the State would have been destroyed to its very foundation.

10. *Ad Atticum* 16.9 (4 November 44) and 16.15.3 (12 November 44)

I do not have complete trust in his age (*non confido aetati*), and I don't know what he's planning.

Although that boy (*iste puer*) is, at the moment, elegantly hammering away at Antony, we should nevertheless wait and see how it all plays out.

11. *Ad Brutum* 1.10.4 (mid-June 43)

If he [Octavian] stays loyal and obeys me, then we should have a sufficient defense; but if, however, the advice of those wicked men around him is more influential than my advice, or if the weakness of his youth (*imbecillitas aetatis*) is not able to bear up to the seriousness of current affairs (*gravitatem rerum sustinere*), then all of our hope will reside in you.

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All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.