

Growing up in the Roman empire

Evander & Pallas in the *Aeneid*

The following passage is an extract from the *Aeneid*, an epic poem written under Augustus' reign which tells the story of Aeneas, the founder of Rome.

This extract shows King Evander saying farewell to his son Pallas, who is leaving with Aeneas, and in leaving his father's palace, entering the world of men and war. Evander's worries in this passage foreshadow Pallas' death in battle later on in the story.

Evander, overcome by emotion, says farewell to his son Pallas

at vos, o superi, et divum tu maxime rector
Iuppiter, Arcadii, quaeso, miserescite regis
et patrias audite preces. si numina vestra
incolumem Pallanta mihi, si fata reservant,
si visurus eum vivo et venturus in unum:
vitam oro, patior quemvis durare laborem.
sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris:
nunc, o nunc liceat crudelem abrupere vitam,
dum curae ambiguae, dum spes incerta futuri,
dum te, care puer, mea sera et sola voluptas,
complexu teneo, gravior neu nuntius auris
volneret." haec genitor digressu dicta supremo
fundeat: famuli conlapsum in tecta ferebant.

But you, powers above, and you, Jupiter, mighty ruler of the gods,
take pity I beg you on this Arcadian king, and hear
a father's prayer. If your will, and fate, keep my Pallas safe,
if I live to see him and be together with him, I ask for life:
I have the patience to endure any hardship.
But if you threaten any unbearable disaster, Fortune,
now, oh now, let me break the thread of cruel existence,
while fear hangs in doubt, while hope's uncertain of the future.
while you, beloved boy, my late and only joy, are held
in my embrace, and let no evil news wound my ears.'
These were the words the father poured out at their last parting:
then his servants carried him, overcome, into the palace.

Aeneid 8, 572 - 583

What examples of emotional attachment between
father and son can you find in this passage?

This is a fictional account. Do you think we can still draw conclusions from it
about the relationships between parents and children in the Roman world?

"Human emotion is universal and unchanging".
Do you agree with this statement?