CHORDA TYMPANI NOTES

The nerve usually arises about 4 mm superior to the stylomastoid foramen, although it may arise distal to the stylomastoid foramen (especially in children). *The nerve follows a course which is phylogenetically determined; it is the pretrematic branch of the second branchial arch, and connects the Vth cranial nerve (the nerve of the first branchial arch) with the nerve of the second branchial arch (the facial nerve).* Thus it runs with the facial nerve in the area derived from the second branchial arch and with the trigeminal nerve (mandibular division) in the region derived from the first arch.

It follows a recurrent route superiorly in its own canal (the “posterior canaliculus” or “canaliculus chordae tympani”), and enters the tympanic cavity through an opening in the *chordal eminence* lateral to the pyramidal eminence and medial to the posterior annulus. The foramen in this eminence is called the *iter chordate posterius*.

It then has a transtympanic course lateral to the long process of the incus and medial to the neck of the malleus in a mucosal membrane.

The nerve then passes into a foramen called the “iter chordate anterius” and exits the tympanic cavity via the “anterior canaliculus” or “canal of Huguier”, and enters the petrotympanic fissure. The nerve then exits the skull at the medial surface of the spina angularis of the sphenoid bone, which is near the medial surface of the temporomandibular joint. It then travels anteriorly to join the lingual nerve.