

***Quintiliane, vagae moderator summe iuventae* (Martial 2.90.1):
The Didactic Conception of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria***



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Abstract

This is a study about the didactic conception of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. Building on recent scholarship on ancient didactic prose and poetry and focusing particularly on Quintilian's construction of an authoritative didactic persona, his self-profiling against other writers and didactic figures, and 'proleptic' strategies through which he deflects responsibility for the potential lack of success of students who follow his advice, I examine how throughout the *Institutio*, Quintilian persuades readers of the validity of the educational programme he presents.

Chapter one analyses how Quintilian introduces himself and his didactic project at the start of the *Institutio* and considers the overall conception of the work. I show how the impression of a gradually progressing didactic journey is conveyed and argue that the criteria that Katharina Volk identifies for didactic poetry can be fruitfully applied to the *Institutio*.¹

Chapter two reconsiders Quintilian's relationship to Cicero. I argue that he acknowledges Cicero's authority on rhetorical theory but strives to assert his own independence as a writer. I suggest that Quintilian celebrates Cicero's oratory but denies that he was the ideal orator, maintaining that 'now' is the best moment to reach the ideal. This balancing act is key for the didactic framework of the *Institutio*, which would be undermined if the ideal orator had already existed or could not possibly exist.

Chapter three highlights the main differences between Quintilian's and Cicero's conceptions of the ideal orator, presents the key characteristics of his conception in the *Institutio*, and suggests that there are significant, if polemical, elements of a reception of Seneca the Younger.

Chapter four discusses how Quintilian contrasts 'good' style with two currents of stylistic corruption, 'archaism' and 'modernism', borrowing Senecan vocabulary to describe the latter but simultaneously using it to describe Seneca's own writing. This chapter raises a central question: how can Quintilian's criticism of contemporary oratory coexist with his predictions of its bright future? The answer I propose is that by linking modernism, the predominant current of corruption, to Seneca, Quintilian can present it as an anachronistic remnant of the Neronian past, which must be replaced by his own Flavian project.

In a nutshell, this thesis aims to analyse the didactic conception of the *Institutio*, setting these techniques against the background of the work's overall construction, goal, and models.

¹ Volk 2002, 37-39.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	6
1 Setting the Scene.....	11
1.1 The Start of the <i>Institutio</i>	11
1.1.1 The Letter to Trypho.....	11
1.1.2 The <i>Preface</i> to Book 1	13
1.2 The Structure of the <i>Institutio</i>	28
1.2.1 Linearity and “Simultaneity” of Progress.....	28
1.2.2 “Simultaneity” Between Text and Life.....	41
Conclusion.....	49
2 Anxiety of Ciceronian Influence.....	50
Introduction	50
2.1 Cicero the Theorist.....	51
2.1.1 Disagreeing with Cicero: On Aptness (<i>Inst.</i> 11.1) and Memory (<i>Inst.</i> 11.2).....	51
2.1.2 Pitching the <i>Institutio</i> against Cicero’s Rhetorical Writings	61
2.2 Cicero the Orator.....	64
2.2.1 ‘Canonizing’ Cicero.....	64
2.2.2 Criticising Cicero: On Laughter (<i>Inst.</i> 6.3) and Aptness (<i>Inst.</i> 11.1)	73
2.2.3 Cicero the Ideal Orator?.....	86
Conclusion.....	94
3 The Ideal Orator. Didactic Goal and Literary Construct	96
Introduction	96
3.1 The Ideal Orator, Philosophy and Philosophers.....	97
3.1.1 Platonic-Ciceronian Precedent and Stoic Traces	97
3.1.2 ‘Re’-Claiming Philosophy for the Orator	108
3.1.3 Omitting Political Philosophers	119
3.2 The Ideal Orator as a Man of ‘Action’	121
3.2.1 Knowledge as a Means, not as an End.....	121
3.2.2 ‘The Style is the Man’	129
3.2.3 Defusing Moral Issues	140
Conclusion.....	145
4 Playing with Anachronism? On Present and Past Oratory	146
Introduction	146
4.1 Corrupt Contemporary Oratory.....	147
4.1.1 Introducing Corrupt Oratory to Pupils and Readers	147
4.1.2 Archaisers. Recondite Tastes	155
4.1.3 Modernists. Seducing the Crowds	159
4.2 Quintilian on Seneca the Younger	172

4.2.1	Evaluating Seneca (<i>Inst.</i> 10.1.125-31).....	172
4.2.2	On Seneca and His Star-Pupil Nero.....	179
	Conclusion.....	183
	Conclusion.....	184
	Bibliography	188

Introduction

In the *Institutio oratoria*, M. Fabius Quintilianus (Quintilian from now on) sets out to educate an orator who is both technically and morally outstanding, whom he memorably defines through a Catonian maxim as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (*Inst.* 12.1.1: “the good man, skilled in speaking”).² The result is the fullest discussion of rhetorical theory surviving from Greco-Roman antiquity. Written towards the end of the first century CE shortly before the end of Domitian’s reign, it encompasses the rich rhetorical tradition as it had developed since Plato and Aristotle. Quintilian, born in Calagurris (present-day Calahorra) in the thirties CE, studied in Rome, returned to his native Spain and then, according to St. Jerome, came back Rome in 68 CE in the entourage of Galba and was later endowed by Vespasian with the first state-sponsored chair of rhetoric (*Jer. Chron.* 186b: 1901 Helm). Domitian later made him the tutor of his grand-nephews and prospective heirs (*Inst.* 4 *pr.* 2) and, Ausonius tells us, even honoured him with consular *insignia* (*Grat. act.* 7.1). Quintilian’s mention of his role as a princely educator shows how successful his career was and indicates 95CE as a *terminus ante quem* for the publication of the *Institutio*, for Flavius Clemens, the father of Domitian’s grandnephews, was executed in that year (*Suet. Dom.* 15.1, *Cass. Dio* 67.14.1). Since Quintilian claims to have retired after twenty years of teaching, scholarly consensus is that the *Institutio* is likely to have been published in the first half of that decade.³ His prominence as a teacher of rhetoric in (near-)contemporary Rome is evident from his mentions in Martial, Juvenal and Pliny the Younger, who pays homage to him as his teacher.⁴ Martial’s verse, which I have chosen for my title, neatly conveys this status: *Quintiliane, vagae moderator summe iuventae* (*Martial* 2.90.1: “Quintilian, foremost guide of fickle youth”).

Modern readers have similarly viewed Quintilian as the paradigmatic teacher, for instance Alexander Pope in his *Essay on Criticism*: “In grave Quintilian’s copious work we find / The justest rules, and clearest method join’d”.⁵ While Martial, Juvenal and Pliny may have met Quintilian in person, Alexander Pope obviously did not, but bases his judgement on his reading of the *Institutio* alone. This speaks for highly successful authorial self-representation within this work, and raises a question: what exactly is didactic about the *Institutio*? This is the question I set out to answer in my thesis.

Long read primarily with a “mining approach”, as Teresa Morgan put it, this work has attracted increasing attention in the past few years.⁶ The rising number of scholars working on Quintilian corresponds to an increased interest in technical prose and its persuasive character.⁷ As a didactic work,

² Abbreviations for Classical authors and works are taken from the Oxford Classical Dictionary. I will cite the *Institutio* simply as “*Inst.*” instead of “*Quint. Inst.*”.

³ See Adamietz 1986, 2249; Coleman 1986, 3108-9; Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 197; Fernández López 2010, 308.

⁴ See Whitton 2019, 26-29 on Pliny’s mentions of Quintilian as his teacher. See also *Juv.* 6.75; 6.280; 7.186-89.

⁵ Pope 1965, vv. 669-70.

⁶ Morgan 1998, 254.

⁷ As testified also by the new Oxford Handbook on Quintilian, which I have not thoroughly engaged with yet. The *Institutio* for a long time did not figure much in the discussion of technical writing: Fuhrmann 1960, 8-9 leaves it out as transcending his definition of technical writing regarding the ambitiousness of style and scope. Ax

it is intrinsically persuasive insofar as it strives to convince the reader of the validity of the teachings conveyed.⁸ And indeed, scholars have shown that Quintilian consistently employs many of the rhetorical techniques it teaches.⁹ While he rejects a definition of rhetoric as “the power to persuade” (2.15.3: *uim persuadendi*; see §3.1.1), persuasion is the aim of the bulk of the teachings he conveys. By implementing the strategies he describes, he both teaches by example and persuades readers that his didactic project is worth their time. Two particularly striking examples of this are his mourning of his wife and sons in the preface to book six, followed by his discussion of how to arouse emotions in the last part of the speech, and the elaborate preface preceding his treatment of prefaces in book four, as shown by Matthew Leigh and Irene Peirano Garrison respectively.¹⁰ As for the orator he endeavours to teach, the construction of a likeable and trustworthy didactic persona is crucial for the persuasiveness of Quintilian’s own endeavour.¹¹ Likeable and trustworthy, however, does not mean meek: as we will see, often hidden through layers of self-deprecatory politeness, polemic plays an important part in his construction of didactic authority.¹² For the sake of simplicity, throughout the thesis I will use the name Quintilian to indicate the persona constructed in the work, not the real person – also where ‘real-life’ experience is referred to, giving the reader the impression of a palpable person. While it is safe to say that real-life events he mentions took place, since a contemporary audience would most likely have detected and taken issue with deliberately misleading fictions, they are still constructs and we should assess them primarily for how the author selected and narrated them to contribute to his self-presentation. Thus, building on this recent research, one key focus of my thesis will be to show, on a more extensive scale than has been done so far, how ‘Quintilian’ often implements the precepts he gives and carefully constructs his authorial persona throughout the work with a view to pulling readers along and convincing them that his rhetorical techniques are the best ones.

Another helpful starting point to examine the didactic framework of the *Institutio* is recent research on didactic poetry. Gregory Hutchinson has pointed out that didactic poetry and prose are not as distant from each other as long assumed.¹³ Insights into the workings of the former can be fruitfully applied to the latter. In particular, what Don Fowler termed the “didactic plot” is key to the *Institutio*: as we will see, Quintilian frames the pupil’s progress as the journey of a lifetime, from birth to

2005, 118-19 takes Vitruvius rather than Quintilian as an example of technical prose. He remarks that the artfulness of technical prose often makes it impossible to differentiate clearly between artless ‘Fachliteratur’ and literary ‘Kunstprosa’, but he maintains the utility of the differentiation.

⁸ See Van der Eijk 1997, 81 or Reinhardt 2007, 366 on ancient didactic as a type of writing striving to communicate a certain body of knowledge and to persuade the reader of its validity, and thus as “inherently ‘rhetorical’”; Formisano 2017, 13 on the need for a more nuanced appraisal of the relationship between form and content in technical writing. See also König 2017, 7; Fernández López 2010, 307.

⁹ See on how Quintilian performs the precepts he teaches Kennedy 1969, 73; also Dozier 2014, 71.

¹⁰ Leigh 2004, 122 and Peirano Garrison 2019, 115.

¹¹ See *Inst.* 6.2.13 on the importance for the orator to construct an *ethos* for himself as a good and agreeable man. Arist. *Rh.* 1356a1-4 first introduces the three means of persuasion *ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*.

¹² As Leddy 1953, 51 notes, polemic against other rhetoricians is a prominent feature of the *Institutio*. Compare Nickel 2005, 41 on polemic as an important feature of Galen’s writing strategy.

¹³ Hutchinson 2009, 211.

retirement, and the construction of a well-reasoned, gradual didactic progression constitutes one of his main claims to authority.¹⁴ Also the four criteria that Katharina Volk identifies as markers of didactic poetry are helpful to think with: “explicit didactic intent”, “teacher-student constellation”, “poetic self-consciousness” and “poetic simultaneity”.¹⁵ They will build the basis for part of my first chapter.

The fact that the professed goal of the *Institutio* is to educate not just any orator, but the ideal orator in the real world outside the work, furthermore, poses a particular challenge: how can Quintilian preserve his didactic authority in the event that nobody should, following his programme, ever reach this ideal? I will argue that Quintilian makes use of what I will call ‘proleptic’ strategies to circumvent this problem. Most importantly, we will see that by highlighting the importance of natural talent and of the pupil’s engagement in training, he presents education as a collaborative venture. He also underlines the impossibility of conveying comprehensively all the precepts students will need, and instead he proceeds more economically by way of selected examples. If no pupil will ever reach the ideal, this will not indicate the faultiness of Quintilian’s didactic construct, but simply that nobody who tried to implement his vision so far had the talent, or invested the effort, needed to reach it. And as we will see, both positive (‘protreptic’) and negative (‘apotreptic’) examples play an important role in the *Institutio*. We are presented with the contrasting images of the good and bad pupil, teacher, reader, orator (and his style) as models to follow, and antimodels to avoid.

But how can we speak about Quintilian without Cicero? Another aim of this thesis will be to recalibrate Quintilian’s reception of his over-bearing predecessor, and to show how he balances between deferential acknowledgement of his model and self-assertion in contraposition to him. I will also consider his reception of Seneca the Younger, showing that, the other way around, while Quintilian criticises him rather harshly, this does not prevent him from borrowing from him where convenient.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I aim to ‘set the scene’ by introducing the main leitmotifs of Quintilian’s self-representation and didactic strategies and by giving a sense of the construction of the whole work. I will start with a reading of Quintilian’s own “proemial double-step”, as Christopher Whitton calls it, constituted by the *Letter to Trypho* (§1.1.1) and the *Preface* to book 1 (§1.1.2), in which Quintilian first showcases defining features of his didactic programme and persona.¹⁶ He introduces ‘himself’ foremost as a modest, knowledgeable and widely respected man, who has long experience both of teaching and of forensic activity. He politely, but at second glance rather polemically, distances himself from other didactic figures on the grounds that the *Institutio* will present all the knowledge the future orator will need while leaving out superfluous detail,

¹⁴ Fowler 2000, 208. See also Gale 2004b, 51; 54 on the tendency of ancient didactic poetry to present material in a narrative framework and on the fictional relationship established in the work between *praeceptor* and pupil, as well as on the importance of extended epic simile. Regarding Lucretius specifically, she individuates a progression from birth (that of Venus) to death (the plague).

¹⁵ Volk 2002, 37-39.

¹⁶ See Whitton 2019, 487-91 on this “double-step” and its echoes in Plin. *Ep.* 1.1-2 and 9.1.

leading him from the earliest stages of his training up to the heights of rhetorical theory and to his retirement. Three out of four of Katharina Volk's criteria can already be identified: "explicit didactic intent", "teacher-student constellation" and "poetic self-consciousness"; 'poetic' does not quite fit the bill, but Quintilian advertises the deliberateness of his stylistic choices. In the second half of the chapter, I will turn to Volk's fourth category, "poetic simultaneity". In §1.2.1, I will discuss how within the work, he creates the impression of a linear and simultaneous progress of work and pupil, gradually increasing in difficulty – thus fulfilling the announcement made in the *Preface*. In §1.2.2, I will show how he also creates the impression that events of his 'real' life outside the work happen in parallel with the writing process. This reinforces the impression of simultaneity and significantly contributes to his self-presentation as a good teacher and a good man.

The second chapter revolves around Quintilian's reception of Cicero. I consider first his reception as a writer on rhetorical theory, then as an orator. I will first engage with some instances in which Quintilian disagrees with Cicero on points of rhetorical theory, focusing on his discussions of aptness and memory (§2.1.1) and how he sets his *Institutio* as a thought-through, coherent work which is the product of a lifetime against Cicero's beautiful, but inconsistent rhetorical writings (§2.1.2). Then, I will show how he 'canonizes' Cicero by setting him as a normative model within his educational programme (§2.2.1) before turning to two substantial criticisms of Cicero's rhetorical practice, his penchant for jokes and self-praise (§2.2.2). Finally, I will turn to Quintilian's explicit denial that Cicero was the perfect orator, and his positive predictions for future oratory. I will argue that this is a necessary premise of his didactic work: if the ideal had already materialized or could not be reached, the *Institutio* would be undermined in its didactic scope (§2.2.3). Overall, we will see that Quintilian balances between deference towards Cicero and striving to assert his own authority.

In the third chapter, I will have a closer look at Quintilian's "explicit didactic intent", Volk's first criterion: the education of the ideal orator. Here again, one must start from Cicero. I will first show how Quintilian claims to be following Cicero's lead in his conception of the ideal orator, but really differs from him in meaningful ways. Then, I will outline the depiction of this (ideal) orator himself. First, I will point out how Quintilian claims a Ciceronian-Platonic pedigree for his ideal orator, but tacitly adopts Stoic notions absent from his model (§3.1.1). Then, I will show how he builds a strong contrast between 'acting' orators, with whom he aligns himself, and 'talking' philosophers, which is very far off from Cicero's conception of a philosophically educated orator. I will suggest that Quintilian is adopting, and polemically overturning, this dichotomy from Seneca the Younger to contravene Cicero's own belittling of rhetorical teachers (§3.1.2). I will then draw attention to Quintilian's omission of Stoic philosophers opposing one-man rule, a skilful omission functional to his depiction of philosophers, and thus also, *ex negatiuo*, of orators (§3.1.3). But how can one devalue 'speaking' in a work on rhetoric without undermining its very purpose? This question gives way to the second half of the chapter. I will show how the (ideal) orator is drawn primarily as a man of forensic action, whose words have palpable consequences (§3.2.1), and how this depiction is supported by the normative

description of good style through metaphors and similes of bodily strength and fight. I will propose that Quintilian adopts, again from Seneca, the notion that an orator's style and character are tightly linked (§3.2.2).¹⁷ Finally, I will address the fundamental tension, in the depiction of the ideal orator, between the assertion that he must be a 'good' man and the violence of forensic reality. As in the case of political philosophers, we will see that information about contemporary reality which does not fit into Quintilian's conception (the activity of *delatores*) is omitted (§3.2.3).

In the fourth and final chapter, I will consider Quintilian's depiction of contemporary stylistic and moral corruption and his depiction of Seneca the Younger, showing that while Quintilian borrows rather heavily from the Neronian author in his literary critical judgements, he makes him responsible for the main strand of contemporary corruption. First, I will discuss how he introduces two contemporary currents of corrupt oratory, 'archaism' and 'modernism', in connection with his advice on *imitatio* and proposes apotroptic exemplarity as a didactic tool: teachers should confront pupils with bad oratory in small doses, to reinforce their feeling for good style (§4.1.1). Then, I will examine his depiction of 'archaisers' (§4.1.2) and 'modernists', whose style is described in terms echoing descriptions of bad style in Seneca's *Epistles* (§4.1.3). We will see that Quintilian implements his own advice to present negative examples, and that he depicts modernism as the more widespread current, which poses a greater danger as a negative didactic influence on youth. I will then outline his famous evaluation of Seneca the Younger, who is (as I take it) presented as a bad literary critic, stylist, and didactic influence, and described similarly to modernists (§4.3.1). Finally, I will discuss another extraordinary appearance of Seneca, where he is linked to Nero and his matricide (§4.3.2). I will suggest that Quintilian's bright predictions for future oratory, which I discussed at the end of my second chapter, and his indictment of widespread contemporary corruption, can be reconciled through the notion of 'polemical anachronism': presenting the foremost Neronian intellectual as the source of contemporary corruption, this corruption can be conveniently dismissed or downplayed as a remnant of the (relatively) recent Neronian past.

Overall, in this thesis I aim to present, on a larger and more nuanced scale than has been done so far, an analysis of Quintilian's didactic strategies, showing how throughout the *Institutio*, he operates with great coherence in his drawing of the orator, his statement of educational principles, his self-representation and his employment of imagery or narrative techniques. To put it slightly more bluntly, I would like to debunk the perception of Quintilian as a competent, but truly 'modest' and rather boring organiser of earlier material and make my small contribution to counteracting what Christopher Whitton has called the "Creusa effect", the delay in research on the sophistication of Latin prose, as opposed to poetry.¹⁸

¹⁷ The metaphors are often essential because they do not only clarify, but substantially contribute to, the definition of style: see the "interaction view" of metaphor proposed by Black 1955, 285-86.

¹⁸ Whitton 2019, 21.

CHAPTER ONE

1 Setting the Scene

1.1 The Start of the *Institutio*

1.1.1 The Letter to Trypho

Quintilian prefixes his work with a letter to his friend, the bookseller Trypho:

Efflagitasti cotidiano conuicio ut libros quos ad Marcellum meum de institutione oratoria scripseram iam emittere inciperem. Nam ipse eos nondum opinabar satis maturuisse, quibus componendis, ut scis, paulo plus quam biennium tot alioqui negotiis districtus inpendi: quod tempus non tam stilo quam inquisitioni operis prope infiniti et legendis auctoribus, qui sunt innumerabiles, datum est. Vsus deinde Horati consilio, qui in arte poetica suadet ne praecipitetur editio 'nonumque prematur in annum', dabam his otium, ut refrigerato inuentionis amore diligentius repetitos tamquam lector perpenderem. Sed si tantopere efflagitantur quam tu adfirmas, permittamus uela uentis et oram soluentibus bene precemur. Multum autem in tua quoque fide ac diligentia positum est, ut in manus hominum quam emendatissimi ueniant. Vale.

“You have been demanding, with daily insistence, that I should now start publishing the books which I wrote, to my friend Marcellus, about ‘the orator’s education’. For I myself did not think that they had yet matured enough. As you know, I spent only a little longer than two years composing them, moreover, occupied by so many pieces of business: that time was devoted less to writing than to researching a work of almost infinite scope and to reading authors, who are innumerable. After that, following Horace’s advice, who in the *Ars poetica* recommends that publication should not be hurried ‘and should be postponed until the ninth year’, I was giving my writing a rest, so that, once the love for my creation had cooled, I could re-examine my books more carefully, like a reader. But if they are requested as insistently as you claim, I shall open the sails to the winds and pray for a good journey for us as we cast off. Much however also depends on your good faith and carefulness, so that my books may reach people’s hands as faultless as possible. Goodbye.”¹⁹

This letter sets the scene for the work, first introducing key elements of Quintilian’s authorial persona. He claims to write it in response to the daily requests of Trypho.²⁰ It is a one-way message, but one which implies a lively, and continuous, exchange preceding it. Trypho’s purported enthusiasm functions

¹⁹ Throughout the thesis, I provide working translations of passages cited, in which I have tried to stay very literal. They do not aim at elegance, but rather form the starting point for my readings, which is why it seemed better to insert them rather than using Donald Russell’s.

²⁰ As Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 1, 5 notes, Trypho is also named Mart. 4.72.

as a certificate of quality: he must believe the *Institutio oratoria* (here given a title for the first and only time) is an excellent work.²¹ Otherwise, why would he be so insistent? It is left to the action of an external agent to assess his value, a common tactic of self-praise.²² Furthermore, this implies that Quintilian did not write his work alone in his study, not in a cultural vacuum, as it were, but at the centre of a social network. This impression is confirmed by the first mention of his addressee, Marcellus Vitorius, and by his claim that he not only wrote his great work in only two years, and two years which were full of *negotia* at that – a very Roman thing to say, as Paul Roche has pointed out, recalling Pliny the Elder’s claims to busyness at the start of his own great work.²³ As we will see, Quintilian consistently distances himself from didactic figures confined to their schoolrooms, contraposing himself to them as a man of real experience not only in teaching, but also in the forum. Simultaneously, the remark that there was an endless amount of reading to be done implies his expertise in the field, a point made again in the *Preface*. Notably, he does not pay the compliment of explicitly mentioning any of these earlier writers on rhetoric, but instead cites Horace, thus showcasing his literary ambition, as Irene Peirano Garrison has discussed.²⁴ The terms in which he describes his intent to follow Horace’s advice to let his love for his new-born work cool for nine years (Hor. *Ars P.* 388) before coming back to it anticipates his later treatment of *emendatio* (“correction”) in *Inst.* 10.4, as Christopher Whitton has shown.²⁵ This is the earliest instance of Quintilian performing his own advice.

One could add that while evoking the Horatian model he is also rejecting it. In doing so, he is drawing our attention to the fact that he is, precisely, an orator and busy man, and not a poet. For in his advice on *emendatio*, he stresses that the orator, called by his many forensic duties, cannot take too much time for this process: *Tempori quoque esse debet modus* (*Inst.* 10.4.4: “The time must have a limit, too”). He contrasts the efficiency with which the orator must operate with the leisurely time writers in other genres can take, adducing the poet Cinna, who wrote his *Zmyrna* in nine years, and Isocrates, who polished his *Panegyricus* for ten, as extreme examples (10.4.4).²⁶ As we will see, Quintilian had earlier separated oratory from other genres on the grounds that the former is used to achieve a concrete end, the latter to please (10.1.38-36; §3.2.2): Isocrates’ procedure is inherently

²¹ Whitton 2019, 34 argues that the claims to popularity are probably “not all hot air” given the status attributed to Quintilian by near-contemporaries, and remarks that Trypho was also Martial’s publisher (Mart. 4.72).

²² As highlighted in Gibson 2003, 245 for Pliny’s letters. See *Inst.* 3.7.22 on other people’s positive judgement as an indicator of morality in living individuals.

²³ Roche 2016, 445 points out that Quintilian’s claim to speedy publication recalls Statius’ *Silvae* (esp. *Silv.* 1 pr. 3; 2 pr. 9) and suggests (ostensible) apologetic self-depreciation, but also highlights the immensity of the project he has undertaken and the *diligentia* he would have liked to devote to it, in evocation of the Horatian model. Compare Plin. *HN pr.* 18, who before embarking on his gigantic work proleptically (and with wry humour) says that he surely missed many things and adds that he is a busy man (*homines enim sumus ... occupati officiis*).

²⁴ Peirano Garrison 2019, 114-15. As Gerbrandy 2020, 38; 46 writes, the citation of Horace is a clear statement of literary ambition, and Quintilian here for the first time uses the nautical imagery he employs throughout to mark his didactic progress.

²⁵ See Whitton 2019, 99 on *Inst.* 10.4.3-4 on *emendatio* and the echoes in Plin. *Ep.* 5.10.3; 9.35.2

²⁶ See on Cinna’s writing Catull. 95.1-2, on Isocrates’ Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 25, [Longinus], *Subl.* 4.2. See also Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 4 on Isocrates not being a practising orator. Compare Cic. *Orat.* 39, where Isocrates is said to have written the *Panathenaicus* not for the forensic fight, but *ad voluptatem aurium*; also *Orat.* 207-9; *Opt. gen.* 17.

unrhetorical.²⁷ Quintilian is advertising that, as the busy man that he is, he composed and edited his work in such a short time, and then was forced to publish it prematurely because of external circumstances. Thus, he marks his belonging to the guild of orators, and lays the groundwork for his self-representation as a man of learning, but more importantly of real (forensic) experience.

Finally, Quintilian here first introduces the travel imagery which most clearly marks the “didactic plot”, as Don Fowler calls it; he will most prominently, and famously, employ sailing imagery in the preface to book 12 (see §3.1.1).²⁸ He is starting his didactic journey – or rather, since this is a letter which clearly signals that it was written after the completion of the work, he is putting his seal of approval onto the *Institutio*, and kicking off his readers’ travels.

1.1.2 The *Preface* to Book 1

In the *Letter to Trypho*, Quintilian advertised his addressee’s keenness on his new work, and his own identity as a busy man. He similarly starts the *Preface* to book 1 (just ‘*Preface*’ from now on) by saying that, after he reached retirement after twenty years of teaching,²⁹ friends asked him to compose something on the art of speaking:

Post impetratam studiis meis quietem, quae per uiginti annos erudiendis iuuenibus inpenderam, cum a me quidam familiariter postularent ut aliquid de ratione dicendi componerem, diu sum equidem reluctatus, quod auctores utriusque linguae clarissimos non ignorabam multa quae ad hoc opus pertinerent diligentissime scripta posteris reliquisse (Inst. 1 pr. 1).

“After I reached leisure for my studies, which I had devoted to educating the young for twenty years, when some friends asked me to compose something about the theory of oratory, I resisted for a long time, because I was not unaware that outstanding writers in both languages had left behind for later generations many very diligently written works regarding this matter.”

The most notable feature of this opening is the author’s display of modesty. Firstly, the complimentary label *clarissimos* applied to the earlier writers expresses his deference towards them.³⁰ Secondly, asserting that he started writing only at his friends’ request and that he was long reluctant to comply

²⁷ See Andersen 1996, 71 on Isocrates as the paradigm of an over-polished writer at *Inst.* 10.1.79. Austin 1948, 101 points to the comment about Isocrates at *Cic. Brut.* 32: *forensi luce caruit*.

²⁸ Whitton 2019, 492 on echoes of the *Letter to Trypho* in *Inst.* 12 pr.

²⁹ Stewart 1979, 105 suggests different possible reasons for Quintilian’s retirement: the wish to relax or to retire while still admired, bereavement, or a change in political atmosphere.

³⁰ Both the stress laid on the multitude and the praise recall the beginning of Sallust’s *Histories* and of Livy’s *Ab urbe condita* (see on the relationship between the two e.g. Ogilvie 1970, 24; Korpanty 1983, 61; Burton 2008, 74; 78). Quintilian transfers the idea of the multitude from the authors onto the writings, and one could say that he supplies the light metaphor implicit in Livy, who (whereas Sallust straightforwardly calls his predecessors *doctissimi*) praises them by pretending that his work own might remain “in the dark” (*in obscuro*) because of theirs. Compare Moles 1993, 141 on Livy’s modesty. Ahlheid 1983, 31 draws the link to Livy’s preface.

with it, he showcases an attempted *recusatio*. It is given added punch through the fight metaphor *reluctatus*: he tried to refuse writing but failed.³¹ Scholarship has sometimes been too ready to take this stance of modesty at face value and to characterize Quintilian as a truly humble personality, modestly stepping behind his authorities, especially Cicero.³² But the preface should be read within the context of the rhetorical treatise: both modesty and weakness are later recommended for prefaces as evoking sympathy with the public, as furthering the *captatio beneuolentiae* (*Inst.* 4.1.8; 4.1.55).³³ Even if the *Institutio* is not a piece of oratory, it is written by an orator and as a didactic work it aims to convince the readers of the writer's authority and of the validity of his teachings: it is intrinsically persuasive. Indeed, we will see that modesty is a prominent feature of the construction of Quintilian's self-presentation throughout the work, and that he often bases his authority on his past experience as a teacher and advocate.³⁴ Here, it is notable that his posture of fighting against the friends who requested him to write also highlights his expertise, next to his modesty.³⁵ For he explains his resistance through his knowledge of his field, emphasised by the litotes *non ignorabam*. The long duration of the struggle underlines their confidence in him; their assessment, like Trypho's, speaks for his authority. He then describes how his friends became even more insistent and how he finally 'gave in' to their request:

*Sed qua ego ex causa faciliorem mihi ueniam meae deprecationis arbitrabar fore, hac accendebantur illi magis, quod inter diuersas opiniones priorum et quasdam etiam inter se contrarias difficilis esset electio, ut mihi si non inueniendi noua, at certe iudicandi de ueteribus iniungere laborem non iniuste uiderentur. Quamuis autem non tam me uinceret praestandi quod exigebatur fiducia quam negandi uerecundia, latius se tamen aperiente materia plus quam imponebatur oneris sponte suscepi, simul ut pleniore obsequio demererer amantissimos mei, simul ne uulgarem uiam ingressus alienis demum uestigiis insisterem. (*Inst.* 1 pr. 2-4)*

³¹ See Janson 1964, 50 and Citroni 2009, 206 on the courteous pretence to take up writing reluctantly, typical of didactic texts (*Rhet. Her.* 1.1, Cic. *Orat.* 1, Sen. *Controv.* 1 pr. 1; similarly, Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.1). At *De or.* 1.4, Cicero also claims to comply with his brother's wish. Compare Gildenhard 2007, 225 on Cicero's stance at *Tusc.* 1.17; *Fin.* 2.17 that he is only lecturing for his young friend's benefit, or Reinhardt 2013, 509 on Horace waiting to assert didactic authority in the *Ars poetica*. See on *recusatio* in Flavian poetry Nauta 2006, 22 and on claiming *nequitia* as an alternative strategy of self-assertion Sharrock 2013, 151.

³² See on Quintilian's Ciceronianism Keeline 2018, 227. Cousin 1975, XLI e.g. writes about Quintilian's "douceur de caractère et ... esprit de paix". Compare also Lana 1990, 302: "Quintiliano, che parla *candide atque simpliciter* (12.11.8)". See Fögen 2003, 36 on the danger, when reading prefaces of technical prose writers, of either taking the programme outlined excessively at face value or dismissing them as mere convention.

³³ As Adamik 1992, 124 points out. Modesty is displayed prominently e.g. at Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 1: see Dyck 2010, 58-59. See on the usefulness of initial self-disparaging Janson 1964, 51; König 2017, 7. See what Quintilian says on pleasing the audience in a preface (*Inst.* 4.1.57-58). Compare Baraz 2017, 7 on the prefaces in Cicero's philosophical works as the moments of most intense engagement with the reader.

³⁴ E.g. at *Inst.* 6.2.34-36 regarding his ability to arouse emotions during trials: cf. Leigh 2004, 138.

³⁵ Sulp. Vict. *Inst.* 1 similarly starts by claiming that he complied with a frequent request of his addressee and announcing that he mostly followed a circumscribed number of authors but added *nonnulla* when necessary; he modestly states that he leaves his addressee to judge his work's quality, which is not intended for wide circulation. Iul. Sev. *Rhet.* 1 also claims to write not for his own future fame, but rather to present a handy summary for training purposes.

“But for the identical reason that I thought I should more easily receive forgiveness for crying off, they [i.e. my fans] were enflamed more, because [according to them] it was difficult to choose between the different, and sometimes contradictory, opinions of earlier authors; thus, it seemed that they would not incorrectly charge me, if not with inventing new material, so surely with passing judgement about earlier authors. Even if, still, I was not won over so much by the confidence that I could grant what was being asked from me than by the embarrassment of refusing it, as the material opened itself up, I took upon myself more of a burden than was being put on me out of my own initiative – both so that I would render a fuller service to my very loving friends, and so that I would not, having stepped onto a well trodden path, end up retracing someone else’s footprints.”

His friends’ request to evaluate earlier works and to provide a new, clearer work on the art of speaking implies a critique of extant literature as confusing and overall unsatisfying. Attributing this plea to his friends, rather than voicing it himself, allows Quintilian to question the authority of earlier writers while keeping up his pretence of modesty.³⁶ His mission is to pass judgement on them and to grant a new, fuller treatment of the topic.³⁷ Having thus prepared the ground for the introduction of his new project, Quintilian concedes ‘defeat’ (*me uinceret*), reluctantly deciding to comply. In the comparative *non tam ... quam* construction, he modestly states that it was shame not to comply, rather than trust in his strengths, which made him give in. Thereupon, he introduces the allegory of the road to symbolise his writing process. The burden stands for the subject matter he sets out to explain, the footprints for extant rhetorical writings.³⁸ Saying that he strove to go beyond earlier writers by taking up more weight, he claims novelty for the inclusion of material not treated in other works. The description of the path as well trodden characterises the field (rhetorical theory) as much treated, and makes his striving for innovation seem all the more arduous.³⁹ Despite the earlier postulation of weakness, he now stands as a kind of Atlas figure, shouldering a heavy load that shows the greatness of his task.⁴⁰

Furthermore, as Christopher Whitton observes, Quintilian is echoing both the very end of the *Orator* (238: *uerecundia negandi*) and its start:

³⁶ Undermining the opponents is another element advised for prefaces: *Inst.* 4.1.12. Plin. *HN pr.* 14 similarly balances between acknowledging the earlier tradition and asserting novelty. See Russell 2005, 258 on Quintilian’s often polemic vein.

³⁷ Often using *dissensio* accompanied by an adjective: *Inst.* 2.15.1; 3.1.7 (*infinita*); 3.6.22 (*summa*); 3.11.5 (*tanta*); 9.1.10 (*non mediocris*); 11.2.14 (*magna*).

³⁸ The path being the “vehicle”, the writing progress being the “tenor” in the terminology of Richards 1936, 96.

³⁹ Pliny at *HN pr.* 14 differently claims that the path he chose is a *non trita ... uia*.

⁴⁰ Kennedy 1962, 137 reads this as an actual complaint about the difficulty of the task and as an acknowledgement of a feeling of inadequacy, rather than as a rhetorical strategy; overall, he evaluates Quintilian as an unoriginal author, limited by his ‘classicism’.

Quid enim est maius quam, cum tanta sit inter oratores bonos dissimilitudo, iudicare quae sit optima species et quasi figura dicendi? Quod quoniam me saepius rogas, aggrediar non tam perficiendi spe quam experiendi voluntate. (Cic. Orat. 2)

“For what [task] can be greater than to judge what the best sort, and so to say appearance, of oratory is, since there are such great differences between good orators? Since you ask me this quite often, I will approach this issue – not so much because I hope to succeed, but because I am willing to try.”

There are various parallels between Quintilian’s and Cicero’s passage: the claim that someone else asked for the work to be written, the announcement that the evaluation of previous literature lies at its core, and the *non tam ... quam* construction framing the reason for undertaking such a difficult task. The echoes present the *Institutio* as a continuation of the *Orator*,⁴¹ and thus as equally authoritative. This impression is supported by the fact that Quintilian later refers to *Orat.* 7-8 also to claim a Ciceronian precedent for his conception of the ideal orator (§3.1.1). Furthermore, through the ensuing path allegory he may be said to expand on Cicero’s *aggrediar*. Indeed, he later uses the same allegory in his discussion of *imitatio* to encourage students to surpass earlier authors, rather than just reproduce their writing:

Eum uero nemo potest aequare cuius uestigiis sibi utique insistendum putat: necesse est enim semper sit posterior qui sequitur. (Inst. 10.2.10)

“Nobody however can hope to equal the one in whose footsteps he thinks he must tread by all means; for it is necessary that the one following is always inferior.”

A reader coming to this later section will recall that this is precisely what Quintilian, in the *Preface*, programmatically announced he would refuse to do.⁴² By expanding on Cicero’s statement in the *Orator* and on his use of the path imagery, he may be said to perform his advice, on a small scale – creating a *mise en abyme* of his emulation of Cicero, one could say. I will argue in the next section that the ideal reader of the *Institutio* is a linear one, who will appreciate these sorts of links between various sections of the work. The impression that Quintilian leads his readers through a linear educational progress is supported precisely by the path imagery first employed here.⁴³ It helps to structure the work and also

⁴¹ Whitton 2019, 478 writes that, echoing beginning and end of Cicero’s late work, Quintilian styles himself as his successor and “swallows his work whole in a clause”. See on the echo of Cic. *Orat.* 2 also Janson 1964, 53-54, on that of *Orat.* 238 also Hirschberg 1992, 249-50.

⁴² Abfahl 1932, 12 draws the link (without further comment). See Whitton 2019, 326 on how Pliny echoes this passage at *Ep.* 6.11.2.

⁴³ See Abfahl 1932, 69. See Fowler 2000, 208 on path metaphors in didactic poetry as the most obvious markers of a “plot”, and Gale 2004b, 59 on journey metaphors in Lucretius. See on path imagery in the preface to Sallust’s *Bellum Catilinae* Krebs 2008, 581, and Jaeger 1999, 177 for a reading of Livy’s *Ab urbe condita* as a labyrinth,

recalls its prominent employment in verse, showing Quintilian's aspiration to affirm himself within a wider literary context – as already evident from the reference to Horace in the *Letter to Trypho*.⁴⁴

Whether Quintilian is referring to Cicero or not, he clearly signals that his project is an ambitious one. Before finally announcing how exactly he will differ from earlier authors, he skilfully depreciates their works, thus preparing the ground for his own:

Nam ceteri fere qui artem orandi litteris tradiderunt ita sunt exorsi quasi perfectis omni alio genere doctrinae summam fin eloquentiae† manum imponent, siue contemnentes tamquam parua quae prius discimus studia, siue non ad suum pertinere officium opinati, quando diuisae professionum uices essent, seu, quod proximum uero, nullam ingenii sperantes gratiam circa res etiamsi necessarias, procul tamen ab ostentatione positas, ut operum fastigia spectantur, latent fundamenta. (Inst. 1 pr. 4)

“For almost all other authors who committed their arts of speaking to writing have started as if they were adding the last touch, †regarding eloquence†, to [people] already perfect in every other kind of learning, be it because they spurned those studies in which we engage first as small, be it because they thought they do not pertain to their job, since the roles of the professions are distinct, or, which is closest to the truth, because they did not think that it would do their talent justice to engage with things which, even though necessary, go unobserved, as superstructures in buildings can be seen, but the foundations are hidden.”

By equating basic knowledge with foundations, Quintilian conjures up an image of the earlier treatises as houses dangerously built without them, and bound to collapse. By missing the first steps of training, their authors fail to provide their readers and potential pupils with the intellectual tools to grasp the complex subject matter they discuss. They must either fail in their didactic intent or not pursue one at all, addressing an audience that is already proficient. Considering the common use of *monumentum* for a literary work which will be remembered, and preserve memories, in the future, the simile may also imply the ephemerality of these works: collapsed buildings disappear just as badly written works are forgotten.⁴⁵ Quintilian for one, omitting names and titles, plays his part in consigning them to oblivion.⁴⁶

both because of the descriptions of the material city and because of the variant versions of stories imposed on stories already told.

⁴⁴ As Peirano Garrison 2019, 114-15 shows, this passage refers especially to Hor. *Epist.* 1.10.21-22. This metaphor is used also esp. at Callim. *Epigr.* 30.1-2, Prop. 2.23.1-2; 3.1.14. See Roche 2016, 446 on this implicit assertion of literary credentials, and on the Callimachean metaphor of the path.

⁴⁵ See for such a use of *monumentum* e.g. Cic. *Sen.* 38, Livy, 1 pr. 6, Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.1, Sen. *Controv.* 10 pr. 7; *Suas.* 7.2; 10. At *Inst.* 3.7.18, Quintilian draws a direct link between *ingeniorum monumenta* and future times. See Gowing 2016, 45-46 on Livy and Sallust seeing history as a *monumentum* preserving memory, and Tacitus voicing a similar purpose at *Ann.* 3.65.1 and *Agr.* 46.3-5. See Hölkeskamp 2012, 397 on the importance of physical *monumenta* for commemoration.

⁴⁶ See Flower 2006, 56 on how commemorative practice always presupposes a decision about what not to include.

The third option is suggested to be the most plausible one (*quod proximum uero*). Authors are led by a desire to show off, rather than to serve the community. By contrast, Quintilian's own approach, comprising preliminary studies, appears as (architectonically) safe and therefore as the only viable one. The imagery persuasively supports his position, for it allows him to convey his criticism obliquely and to maintain his pretence of modesty.⁴⁷ That bad orators and teachers focus on show, while good ones strive for success regardless of whether they will receive popular acclaim for it, is a recurrent theme in the *Institutio*, as we will see (§§3.1.2; 3.2.1-3; 4.1.1-3).

Accordingly, Quintilian then presents his own work as following a well-defined educational plan which considers even the most basic steps of the orator's education, starting with a contrasting *Ego*:

Ego cum existimem nihil arti oratoriae alienum sine quo fieri non posse oratorem fatendum est, nec ad ullius rei summam nisi praecedentibus initiis perueniri, ad minora illa, sed quae si neglegas non sit maioribus locus, demittere me non recusabo, nec aliter quam si mihi tradatur educandus orator studia eius formare ab infantia incipiam. (Inst. 1 pr. 5)

"I, on the other hand, since I deem that nothing is alien to the art of oratory without which one must admit that the orator cannot come into being, and that nothing can be reached if not starting from the beginning preceding it, will not refuse to lower myself to those things that are smaller, but which you cannot neglect, or else greater ones will have no place; and just as if I was being given the orator to educate, I shall start shaping his studies from infancy."

This sentiment is framed, again through a path allegory, as a progression from the lowly beginnings up to the complexities of rhetorical theory.⁴⁸ Quintilian shows himself as willing to treat basic subjects, and thus as professional and modestly unconcerned with a reputation for brilliance, unlike those anonymous writers who fail to lay down the foundations.⁴⁹ This advertisement of his hard work and modesty recalls that of Pliny the Elder, who equally embarks on a very ambitious work, and may be said to be characteristically 'Flavian' insofar as it matches the image of the hard-working Italian promoted by this dynasty.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the vertical plane hints at his task being a bit like climbing a mountain: one must start from the bottom, and it becomes harder as one proceeds. Indeed, we will see in the next section

⁴⁷ The image of the foundations is used again at *Inst.* 1.4.5 to stress the importance of primary studies, but as a metaphor and thus with a stronger impact: see on this difference Innes 1988, 320. As Aßfahl 1932, 141 writes, Quintilian constantly backs his arguments through similes, according to what he says in *Inst.* 8.3.72.

⁴⁸ See Winterbottom 1995, 320 on the metaphor of the path as a set method, and Worman 2015, 8 on the centrality of rural imagery in ancient theory and criticism. Compare the polemic in *Inst.* 2.3.5 against those who are not willing to 'descend' to basic elements.

⁴⁹ As Fögen 2000a, 143 points out, Quintilian's aim to educate the child is one of his main claims to originality.

⁵⁰ Roche 2016, 437-39 shows that this constitutes a similarity between Pliny and Quintilian (*HN pr.* 18; *Letter to Trypho*). Compare Morello 2011, 159 on Pliny the Elder championing a sense of selfless dedication to utility in his work (*HN pr.* 12). See also Bloomer 2011, 350 on the compendious character of the *Institutio* as typical of its age. Hard work enables success: Winterbottom 2005, 182.

that Quintilian creates the impression of a progress which is not only linear, but also increasing in difficulty and happening ‘simultaneously’ within the work and for the student (§1.2.1).⁵¹

As the child grows, what he learns will gradually increase in complexity. This interconnection becomes evident in the subsequent dedication of the work to Marcellus Vitorius and his son Geta, in which path and growth imagery are merged:

Quod opus, Marcelle Vitori, tibi dicamus, quem cum amicissimum nobis tum eximio litterarum amore flagrantem non propter haec modo, quamquam sint magna, dignissimum hoc mutuae inter nos caritatis pignore iudicabamus, sed quod erudiendo Getae tuo, cuius prima aetas manifestum iam ingenii lumen ostendit, non inutiles fore libri uidebantur quos ab ipsis dicendi uelut incunabulis per omnes quae modo aliquid oratori futuro conferant artis ad summam eius operis perducere festinabimus, atque eo magis quod duo iam sub nomine meo libri ferebantur artis rhetoricae neque editi a me neque in hoc comparati. (Inst. 1 pr. 6)

“This work, Marcellus Vitorius, I dedicate to you, whom, while you are a close friend of mine and burning with great love for literature, I deemed most deserving of this token of our mutual affection not only because of these qualities – even if they are great –, but because I thought that to educate your [son] Geta, whose earliest age already shows a clear spark of talent, these books would not be useless, which I will hurry to lead from the very cradle, as it were, of speaking, through all things which may contribute to the artfulness of the future orator, up to the height of this subject; and all the more because two books of an ‘Art of Rhetoric’ were already circulating under my name, which were neither published by me nor composed for this purpose.”

Promising that he will hurry to lead the books from the cradle of eloquence up to its height, Quintilian creates a parallel between the nurture of little Geta and his progress along the stages of rhetorical training. Since we would expect Geta to be the focus of the imagery, not the books, this is a surprising touch which draws our attention to the ‘simultaneity’ of this progress. Pliny the Younger employs the same cradle metaphor in relation to his uncle’s lost rhetorical work, but refers it to the orator himself:

‘Studiosi tres’, in sex uolumina propter amplitudinem diuisi, quibus oratorem ab incunabulis instituit et perficit. (Plin. Ep. 3.5.5)

“Three [books] ‘On the Scholar’, divided into six volumes because of their length, in which he educates and perfects the orator from the cradle.”

⁵¹ Compare Fögen 2009, 121 on the analogous claim to clear structure and brevity in Vitr. Arch. 5 pr. 5.

Since this work is lost, it is difficult to assess Quintilian's relationship to it, but perhaps there may be some significance in the fact that his own is double the length. An intertext which can be established with more certainty is Cic. *De or.* 1.23. Cicero also employs the cradle metaphor at the start of his dialogue, but to the opposite end, namely to announce that he will not treat basic subject matter:

... repetamque non ab incunabulis nostrae veteris puerilisque doctrinae quendam ordinem praeceptorum, sed ea, quae quondam accepi in nostrorum hominum eloquentissimorum et omni dignitate principum disputatione esse versata. (Cic. *De or.* 1.23)

“... and I shall reiterate not some series of precepts from the cradle of our old and basic [childish] education, but those [things] which I once heard to have been discussed in a debate among those of our men who were the most eloquent and outstanding in every respect.”

Cicero explicitly states that he will not reiterate basic precepts. He explains his decision by assuring that he does not omit them because he disdains basic teachings left behind by Greek rhetorical masters and teachers, but because they are already obvious and are accessible to everyone; thus, he adds, his brother (his addressee) will hopefully forgive him for preferring the authority of those men who were most highly praised by the Romans for their eloquence to that of the Greeks (*De or.* 1.23). Cicero relegates the discussion of basic precepts to the Greek cultural sphere, claiming advanced oratory for Roman statesmen. Quintilian's announcement that he will start *ab incunabulis* may be a further statement of *aemulatio*. He explicitly appropriates a domain which Cicero left aside, taking the mission of presenting a Latin version of Greek philosophy and culture to Roman readers a step further. This hypothesis may be supported by the programmatic character of both passages. As I will discuss, Quintilian later cites a sentence which comes just a few lines earlier in Cicero's text, and repeatedly claims novelty over Cicero for his more methodical treatment of single topics, which is more 'didactic' insofar as it does not presuppose students who are already proficient (*De or.* 1.21 in *Inst.* 2.21.5; see §2.1.1-2). At various points in his rhetorical writings, Cicero opposes 'Roman' *negotium* to 'Greek' *otium* (*De or.* 1.221; 2.55-60; 2.75-76, *Or.* 108) and he explicitly distances himself from the idea that he is teaching "as in a school" (*Or.* 144: *quasi in ludo*); teaching has its dignity, but not if it is overly basic and technical. This poses a challenge for Quintilian: how can he claim to surpass Cicero in didactic terms (and specifically by including basic knowledge) while sidestepping the risk that his predecessor's demeaning remarks on teaching reflect negatively on his undertaking? We will see that Quintilian consistently draws other didactic figures as unworldly, and himself as basing his teachings on real-life experience, thus presenting not teaching as such, but 'useless' knowledge as 'Greek' (§3.1.2).

We have seen how already in the *Letter to Trypho*, he presents himself as an active member of society. The same can be said regarding the dedication of his work to Marcellus Vitorius for the sake of Geta. Again, a wider social context is conjured up: as Katherine Coleman observes, Marcellus is also

the addressee of *Stat. Silv. 4 pr. 1* and seems to have been conspicuously loyal to Domitian.⁵² Quintilian depicts a friendly relationship in which he figures not merely as a teacher, but also as a family friend of the boy.⁵³ This is exactly what he later recommends: fathers should make sure to befriend the teacher, so that he will take good care of the pupil (*Inst. 1.2.15-16*). Conversely, pupils “should love” (*ament*) their teachers (2.9.1). As seen in the passage cited above, the second reason Quintilian gives for ‘hurrying’ with his project, next to Geta’s benefit, is that two books about the art of rhetoric are already circulating under his name, unauthorised by him. He blames this circumstance on the excessive enthusiasm of affectionate pupils:

*Namque alterum sermonem per biduum habitum pueri quibus id praestabatur exceperant, alterum pluribus sane diebus, quantum notando consequi poetuerant, interceptum boni iuuenes sed nimium amantes mei temerario editionis honore uulgauerunt. Quare in his quoque libris erunt eadem aliqua, multa mutata, plurima adiecta, omnia uero compositiora et quantum nos poterimus elaborata. (*Inst. 1 pr. 7-8*)*

“For the boys for whom it was delivered had excerpted the one lecture, held over two days; good youths, but ones who are too fond of me, having intercepted the other one, held over several days, as far as they could by taking notes, circulated it through the hasty honour of publication. Because of this, in these books [the *Institutio*] as well, some elements will remain the same, many will have been changed, quite a few added, all arranged better and elaborated as far as I shall be able.”

We are presented with an enthusiastic young public – again, Quintilian leaves his own praise to others. The youths love him, precisely as pupils should love a good teacher. It also appears that he announces the *Institutio* to be his authorised, final work, and discredits ‘fakes’ attributed to him – this is the real deal, not some second-hand notes (however well intentioned).⁵⁴ One could say that readers (who could be called ‘consumers’ in the sense that they must be persuaded to fully buy into this particular didactic ‘product’ and not to stop reading after the *Preface* and look for another) are guaranteed an authentic, first-rate work. Accordingly, Quintilian then tells us how he improved on the ‘fakes’. Right after, he announces the goal of his treatise:

⁵² Coleman 1986, 3102; 3110.

⁵³ See Citroni 2009, 211 on the friendly relationship drawn here, and Bloomer 2015, 351 on Quintilian’s stance as the experienced adviser to an aristocratic paterfamilias as an important part of his persona. Indeed, at *Inst. 8.5.8* he points out that it would be ridiculous for “a boy, youth or also an insignificant man” (*puerum aut adolescentulum aut etiam ignobilem*) to judge or teach in a speech: both things require authoritativeness.

⁵⁴ Peirano Garrison 2012, 3 gives a twofold definition of the ‘fake’: “Texts which self-consciously purport either to be the work of the author to whom they are attributed or to be written at a different time from that in which they were composed.”

Oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi uir bonus non potest, ideoque non dicendi modo eximiam in eo facultatem sed omnis animi uirtutes exigimus. (Inst. 1 pr. 9)

“But I am educating that perfect orator, who cannot but be a good man, and because of this I do not require from him only an exquisite ability to speak, but also every virtue of the soul.”

In Katharina Volk’s terminology, Quintilian, after creating a “teacher-pupil-constellation” between himself and Geta, now states his “explicit didactic intent”, which is to educate the ideal orator. The required ethical character of the orator is emphasised first by the litotes *nisi ... non*, as well as the *non ... modo ... sed* construction, laying the accent on the second half of the sentence and signalling that the scope of this work goes beyond that of a technical handbook. In the following paragraphs, Quintilian sets his ideal orator in relation to philosophy, making it clear that this orator is not, by any means, a philosopher, a characteristic feature of his project which I will discuss below (1 pr. 10-18: see §3.1.3). Furthermore, this definition confirms what already emerged from the promise to accompany Geta through the various stages of his growth: the intent is to form a *uir*, a ‘real’ man.⁵⁵ We will see that the conception of the ideal orator is tightly linked to a normative ideal of masculinity, which is supported by the prominent use of metaphors of ‘masculinity’ and ‘effeminacy’ to describe good and bad oratory (§§3.2.1-3). As a modern reader, I think there is little to do but to simply acknowledge and examine this side of Quintilian’s work – he is drawing an ideal, but this ideal is influenced by the literary and sociohistorical context of Early Imperial Rome. While young girls of good families did receive some training in the first stages of education, Quintilian’s project is clearly directed at boys. As Maude Gleason writes, his mission “is nothing less than that of turning boys into men”.⁵⁶ Accordingly, I will be speaking of the child, boy, youth, man, and make no attempt at using female pronouns.⁵⁷

After setting his project in relation to philosophy and restating his intent to educate the ideal orator, Quintilian reassures readers about its feasibility: nobody perhaps has reached this ideal yet, but this does not mean that we have to strive any less for it: this is what most authors of old did, who conveyed teachings of wisdom even if they did not think that anyone had yet been found to be wise (1 pr. 19). Perfect eloquence does exist: *Nam est certe aliquid consummata eloquentia neque ad eam peruenire natura humani ingenii prohibet* (1 pr. 20: “For there certainly exists something that is perfect eloquence, and the nature of human talent does not prohibit reaching it”). And even if future students fail to reach perfection, those who strive for the top will nevertheless step higher than those who stayed at the bottom because of pre-emptive despair about reaching their goal (1 pr. 20). Quintilian here first

⁵⁵ See Connolly 2007, 84 and Leidl 2003, 49 on the long tradition of representing rhetoric as male.

⁵⁶ Gleason 1995, 116.

⁵⁷ To put it more bluntly, I do not think it is useful to gloss over this element of Quintilian’s writing, because it risks giving a distorted picture, and whitewashing elements which are, from a contemporary perspective, problematic. Bloomer 2011, 39 rightly remarks that girls received some education, but I would disagree with his idea that girls are included in Quintilian’s educational programme as outlined in the *Institutio*.

introduces two important notions that contribute to the plausibility of his didactic project: that literary (and generally cultural) development is necessarily progressing, and that the very nature of man allows for excellent results (§§3.1.1; 4.3.3).

Then, he gives an overview of the work (1 *pr.* 21-2), thus complying with the advice he later gives for prefaces: the listener, here the reader, will more willingly follow an argument of which he already knows the structure (4.1.34).⁵⁸ He introduces it with (mocking) self-deprecation:

Quo magis impetranda erit uenia si ne minora quidem illa, uerum operi quod instituimus necessaria, praeteribo. (Inst. 1 pr. 21)

“All the more, pardon will have to be granted if I do not even leave out those elements which are smaller, but which are necessary for the work that I undertake.”

That this approach needs no excuses, but rather deserves praise, is implied by *necessaria*, and follows from the earlier criticism of those works leaving out basic teaching. What this means becomes clear from the ensuing paragraph, in which Quintilian gives a summary of the work:

Nam liber primus ea quae sunt ante officium rhetoris continebit. Secundo prima apud rhetorem elementa et quae de ipsa rhetorices substantia quaeruntur tractabimus. Quinque deinceps inuentioni (nam huic et dispositio subiungitur), quattuor elocutioni, in cuius partem memoria ac pronuntiatio ueniunt, dabuntur. Unus accedet in quo nobis orator ipse informandus est. (Inst. 1 pr. 21)

“For the first book will contain what comes before the duty of the *rhetor*. In the second I will treat the first exercises with the *rhetor* and what is asked about the substance of rhetoric itself. Five books are then devoted to invention (for disposition is subsumed under it), four to elocution, to which are added memory and performance.⁵⁹ One will follow in which I must form the orator himself.”

The work’s structure indeed follows this announcement. The bulk of the *Institutio* is structured after the subdivision of oratory into five parts as it had developed during the Hellenistic period: invention

⁵⁸ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, xxiii. Compare Cic. *De or.* 1.209 and *Part.* 29. Quintilian presents readers with a help for navigating his text, even though on a smaller scale than Pliny the Elder, on whose *index* see Nikitinski 1998, 351. See Mayer 2005, 229-33 on the increasing number of authors writing about technical subjects in a literary format, starting from Varro’s *Res rusticae* and Vitruvius’ *De architectura*, comprising Pomponius Mela, Cornelius Celsus, and the Elder Pliny.

⁵⁹ Russell 2001, vol. 1, 63 comments that the expression is ambiguous, and could mean that memory and delivery “come to the aid of” *elocutio*.

(*inuentio*: *Inst.* 3.1-6.5), disposition (*dispositio*: 7.1-10), elocution (*elocutio*: 8.1-11.1), memory (*memoria*: 11.2) and performance (*actio* or *pronuntiatio*: 11.3).⁶⁰ Quintilian makes two essential additions to the usual technical discussions of rhetoric: the young child's preliminary studies (1.1-2.13), discussed before a more general consideration of oratory (2.14-21), and the depiction of the ideal orator (12.1-11). The work starts from the orator's childhood and ends with his retirement.⁶¹ I will discuss the notion of a linear progress in the next section. A comprehensive didactic programme however does not mean endless discussions of superfluous detail:

*His omnibus admiscebitur, ut quisque locus postulabit, docendi ratio quae non eorum modo scientia quibus solis quidam nomen artis dederunt studiosos instruat et, ut sic dixerim, ius ipsum rhetorices interpretetur, sed alere facundiam, uires augere eloquentiae possit. Nam plerumque nudae illae artes nimiae subtilitatis adfectione frangunt atque concidunt quidquid est in oratione generosius, et omnem sucum ingenii bibunt et ossa detegunt, quae ut esse et adstringi neruis suis debent, sic corpore operienda sunt. Ideoque nos non particulam illam, sicuti plerique, sed quidquid utile ad instituendum oratorem putabamus in hos duodecim libros contulimus, breuiter omnia demonstraturi: nam si quantum de quaque re dici potest persequamur, finis operis non reperietur. (*Inst.* 1 pr. 23-25)*

“To all these things will be added, as each topic will require it, a method of teaching that will not merely instruct the students of those topics to which some exclusively attributed the name of ‘art’ and, so to say, interpret the law itself of rhetoric, but which may nourish fluency, increase the strengths of eloquence. For mostly, those naked treatises – through an affectation of excessive subtleness – crush and ruin anything which is more noble in speech, and suck out any juice of talent and lay bare the bones; which, just as they have to be there and be enclosed by their muscles, must be covered by the body. And because of this I did not, as most have done, focus on that small part (of the art), but instead collected what I thought was useful to educate an orator in these twelve books, and will discuss everything briefly: for if I pursue all that can be said about any given thing, there will be no end to this work.”

He claims for himself a method which will nourish fluency and aggrandise the strengths of eloquence in the pupil.⁶² His work will not, as he puts it, just convey the topics treated by those writers who limit

⁶⁰ These are first introduced at *Inst.* 3.3.1. Earlier definitions of the five parts of oratory can be found at *Rhet. Her.* 1.3, *Cic. Inv.* 1.9, and an explanation of their use at *De or.* 3.19. See Adamietz 1966, 86 and Lausberg 1960, 139, §255.

⁶¹ A further subdivision of the work into “art” (*ars*: 3.1-11.3), “artificer” (*artifex*: 12.1-9) and “work” (*opus*: 12.10) is announced at *Inst.* 2.14.5. As Classen 1965, 187 writes, the disproportion between the parts shows that a pre-existing subdivision is adopted which does not determine the work's structure, but maps onto the initial summary.

⁶² See on *alere* Abfahl 1932, 26.

themselves to interpreting the law of rhetoric itself.⁶³ Again without naming names, he accuses other writers on rhetoric of engaging in overly minute sub-divisions of their material instead of envisaging a feasible didactic goal, and of busying themselves with endless internal discussions which are not truly connected to the world of public speaking.⁶⁴ The overflow of superfluous information makes them unable to focus on the knowledge which is essential. Quintilian contrasts his own approach with this kind of dry *artes*; polemic against anonymous others serves to clarify his position. He will select the most important material and present it relatively concisely – complying with the purported wish of his friends to provide them with a reasoned selection of rhetorical theory.⁶⁵ He simultaneously lays claim to brevity and highlights that he has written an impressively extensive work, which makes his feat appear as even more admirable.

Shifting from juridical language to vivid bodily imagery, Quintilian presents these *artes* as some sort of strength-draining vampires, sucking out energy from speech and pupil. The notion that this is an affectation furthermore is consistent with the earlier criticism of authors leaving out basic studies because it does not give them the opportunity to show how talented they are. Throughout the work, *adfectare/adfectatio* is a marker of bad orators and teachers.⁶⁶ They appear not only as useless, but even as harmful: like the simile of the absent foundations, the imagery throws a shadow upon them and casts them as dangerous for the pupil's development.

The metaphor of nakedness, furthermore, adds a stylistic dimension to the criticism. It is repeatedly used for dry style. Later, such a draining effect on students is attributed to a “dry teacher” (2.4.8: *magister aridus*).⁶⁷ That Quintilian indeed regards good style as a part of his superior teaching method clearly emerges from a later programmatic passage. At *Inst.* 3.1.3-4, Quintilian tells us that so far, he has tried to mix “some lustre” (*aliquid nitoris*) into his language to encourage youths to study, thinking that they would then learn “more readily” (*libentior*), and that inversely a jejune and dry presentation would scare them off.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, he underlines that he did not do so “to show off his talent” (*iactandi ingenii gratia*). This disclaimer is in line with his self-presentation as modest: unlike the bad teachers who want to display their talent, he is concerned with his (potential) students' benefit:

⁶³ Such juridical language reappears e.g. at *Inst.* 2.13.1-2, where Quintilian polemically ‘refuses’ to write in the style of most authors of rhetorical *artes*, who present a set of rules as if they were laws determined by unchangeable necessity.

⁶⁴ Compare e.g. *Inst.* 4.2.84; 5.10.18; 5.11.30; 8.6.2; 9.1.16. See García Berrio 1998, 22 on Quintilian's frequent complaints about his colleagues' taste for endless discussion.

⁶⁵ Brevity is one characteristic of clear speech: *Inst.* 8.2.22.

⁶⁶ See esp. *Inst.* 4.1.77, 8 *pr.* 18, 8.3.56, 9.3.74; Bonnell 1834, 33-34 for further passages.

⁶⁷ *Aridus* is also used for a dry style: see esp. *Inst.* 2.4.8; 8 *pr.* 17; 12.10.15. Compare *Rhet. Her.* 4.16.18, Cic. *De or.* 2.159. See also the use of *nudus* at 2.4.3; 3.1.2; 8.6.41; see Bonnell 1834, 79 and 580 for further passages. See Abfahl 1932, 29 and specifically on the rich imagery of 2.4.8-9 Whitton 2019, 251.

⁶⁸ Mayer 2001, 102 argues that the Romans felt metaphors more strongly than English-speakers, which supports the idea that Quintilian's use of *nitor* serves to perform his claim to ornament. Compare Marouzeau 1948, 106 on how Quintilian illustrates theory through practice and defines metaphor itself through light metaphors at *Inst.* 8.6.4.

engaging prose serves to convey material more effectively.⁶⁹ To support his point, he cites the famous Lucretian simile of the honey rim on the cup with “bitter medicine” (*absinthia taetra*), thus comparing his own didactic prose to the poet’s presentation of Epicurean doctrine in *De rerum natura*.⁷⁰ The idea that pleasure (whether it be play for children, fun exercises in school, or ornament in speech and writing) furthers receptiveness is a recurrent one in the *Institutio*.⁷¹ The Lucretian quotation stands out from the prose surrounding it and provides a diversion, which makes us aware of the fact that Quintilian is, as often, performing his own advice. This is an important feature of the work as a whole: throughout, technical discussions of the rhetorical subject matter are interspersed with more ornate sections standing out, for instance, through concentrated amounts of imagery or an anecdote.⁷² While showcasing the author’s artistic skill and thus furthering his authority as a teacher of rhetoric, they may also be said to function as rewarding nuggets for readers who worked their way through drier technical passages, supporting the reader on the linear journey through the text.

In the two final paragraphs of the preface, Quintilian introduces another leitmotiv of the treatise, the interplay between art, nature, and training:

Illud tamen in primis testandum est, nihil praecepta atque artes ualere nisi adiuuante natura. Quapropter ei cui deerit ingenium non magis haec scripta sint quam de agrorum cultu sterilibus terris. (Inst. 1 pr. 26)

“It must be stated, foremost, that precepts and arts are worth nothing unless helped by nature. Therefore, these writings will be of no more use to someone lacking natural talent than writings about agriculture to barren soil.”

The agricultural comparison has various implications: the student’s mind appears as a passive recipient which will be cultivated by the teacher, but also as an entity substantially contributing to the success of

⁶⁹ Adamietz 1966, 64 suggests that Quintilian’s comment that he was afraid to scratch his readers’ tender ears (3.1.3: *ne ... aures praesertim tam delicatas raderet uerebamur*) alludes to Pers. 1.107 (*sed quid opus teneras mordaci radere uero / auriculas*). See Ferriss-Hill 2012, 368 on Persius’ passage harking back to Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.24.

⁷⁰ See ABfahl 1932, 29. See Peirano Garrison 2019, 116 on Quintilian’s reference to Lucretius. Gatzemeier 2013, 97-98 remarks that Quintilian sets himself on the same level as Lucretius as a didactic authority and that his only other quotation of Lucretius (4.1 = 1.926 at 8.6.45 to illustrate allegory) also stems from the proem to *Lucr.* 4, and observes that the fact that he cites Lucretius so little corresponds to his evaluation as difficult (10.1.87). Fögen 2003, 36 writes that technical prose writers often step into the tradition of Lucretius making his subject more pleasurable, particularly when inserting passages of poetry. Ovid also adopts the Lucretian simile at *Ov. Rem. am.* 225-28; 231, but shortly after rejects magical herbs as effective remedies for lovesickness (*Rem. am.* 249-90); this may raise the question of the effectiveness of the *sucos ... amaros* which he purports to have drunk himself, an experience on which he bases his didactic authority.

⁷¹ Cf. e.g. on children’s play providing respite *Inst.* 1.3.8-12, on variety in training 1.12.4; 6.3.15-16; 10.5.16-17, on ornament or wit in speech 4.1.49; 4.2.118; 6.3.1; 9.1.21; 9.2.63; 10.5.16-17; 11.3.43 (on performance).

⁷² See on variations in stylistic register as a notable feature of the *Institutio* Russell 2005, 257.

the enterprise through its innate quality.⁷³ The teacher becomes a kind of farmer, a figure who carries positive connotations in idealised images of the past, and sets the didactic endeavour of the *Institutio* in line with one of the great works of Latin didactic poetry – Vergil’s *Georgics*. Furthermore, one could add that the quality of the land is determined by several external factors, such as topographical position and weather.⁷⁴ Regarding the student, this implies that a teacher is only partly responsible for success in his education. Quintilian then adds that everyone has other inborn aids, namely physical qualities:

Sunt et alia ingenita cuique adiumenta, quae si modica optigerunt, possunt ratione ampliari, sed nonnumquam ita desunt ut bona etiam ingenii studiique corrumpant: sicut haec ipsa sine doctore perito, studio pertinaci, scribendi legendi dicendi multa et continua exercitatione per se nihil prosunt. (Inst. 1 pr. 27)

“Everyone also has other inborn aids which, if received moderately, can be increased through method, but sometimes they are lacking to such an extent that they also destroy the profits of talent and study; just as these are themselves of no use without an experienced teacher, hard work, and copious and consistent exercise in writing, reading and speaking.”

Quintilian here first thematises the delicate balancing of art, nature, and training, the three elements that are all necessary to achieve rhetorical proficiency. Natural talent (and other circumstances such as social status, time, and place) and physical qualities are a ‘black box’ that cannot be influenced by the teacher.⁷⁵ Therefore, they are problematic from a didactic point of view: a teacher can only improve them to some degree, and they may prevent a pupil from reaching perfection or even moderate results. Their mention may be seen as a ‘proleptic’ strategy: even if nobody, following the programme Quintilian presents, will ever become the ideal orator, this will not undermine his didactic authority.⁷⁶ This seems particularly important because it deflates the tensions arising between ideal and practical goals pervading the *Institutio*. The same thing can be said about the emphasis laid on continuous exercise: education, as I will discuss in the next section, is a collaborative venture, and the responsibility for success in great part also lies with the student and those surrounding him.⁷⁷

⁷³ A similar stance is taken at Cic. *De or.* 1.113-14 by Crassus: talent and physical natural gifts cannot be created by art, but they can be improved on: see Fantham 2004, 82.

⁷⁴ See Cato, *Agr.* 1.2-3 on evaluating the location when buying a property as well as Columella, *Rust.* 1.2.3-1.3.8, referring to Cato; and Verg. *G.* 1.50-99.

⁷⁵ See *Inst.* 3.5.1: *Facultas orandi consummatur natura arte exercitatione, cui partem quartam adiciunt quidam imitationis, quam nos arti subicimus*. See for this tripartition also Dion. Halic. *De imit.* frg. 1. Cicero uses it at the start of *Pro Archia*, Maternus introduces it at Tac. *Dial.* 33.2-3: see Bovey 2000, 360-61. Hor. *Ars P.* 408-11 postulates the importance of both talent and art. As Peirano Garrison 2019, 101 notes, Quintilian’s discussion of how to reach *facilitas* is an innovative digression. See Celentano 2020, 95 on Quintilian’s advice making clear that improvisation requires full mastery of the subject.

⁷⁶ Prolepsis or *praesumptio*, the forestalling of objections, is recommended at *Inst.* 9.2.16 as very powerful: see Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 294-95.

⁷⁷ This is stated perhaps most clearly at *Inst.* 7.10.10: *Quaedam uero non docentium sunt sed discentium*.

Overall, it appears that Quintilian leads by example and deftly complies with his own advice on constructing prefaces. He displays modesty and weakness and profiles himself as an experienced and unpretentious teacher to win over the readers' benevolence. Simultaneously, he manages to obliquely undermine other writers, stresses the importance and novelty of his undertaking to make the readers attentive, and discloses the structure of his work to make them teachable. This is a brilliant strategy. These correspondences between theory and practice show the preface to be a highly disingenuous piece of writing, and the author's stance of modesty to be, really, rather self-assertive. In *Letter to Trypho* and *Preface* various elements are introduced that are characteristic of the *Institutio* as a whole. One of the major aspects of Quintilian's self-presentation is the notion that he has been a very busy man who bases his didactic authority on his long experience and knowledge of the field. He presents his work as a comprehensive but polished, thought-through didactic programme in which he included all (but also only) the information that will be useful to the student of oratory. This is the closest we get to a statement of didactic principles. Here, as throughout the *Institutio*, his work, his own didactic persona, and the ideal orator he envisages are contrasted with poor works, didactic figures and orators that serve as a foil against which they stand out more vividly. These negative, 'apotreptic' examples may be said to function as deterrents. Indeed, in his discussion of artful proofs, Quintilian tells us that *exempla* based on difference are most powerful to spur on someone: *Ad exhortationem uero praecipue ualent inparia* (5.11.10: "Unequal [examples] are particularly useful for exhortation"). Caricaturing bad teachers and speakers, he encourages readers to be unlike them. Another prominent feature that emerges at the end of the preface is the oscillation between envisaging an ideal goal and allowing for shortcomings on the side of the pupil that cannot be influenced by the teacher. This, I argue, is an important didactic strategy insofar as it allows Quintilian to deflect criticism in case the ideal should be reached by no one. Furthermore, his rich employment of imagery and the references and potential allusions to other authors, most importantly but not only Cicero, contribute in an essential way to the framing of his didactic project and signal that the *Institutio* is a work of high literary ambitions.

1.2 The Structure of the *Institutio*

1.2.1 Linearity and "Simultaneity" of Progress

In the last two sections, I have discussed how, at the start of the *Institutio*, Quintilian introduces his didactic project, his persona, and themes and strategies which will become prominent throughout the work, such as the notion of gradual progress and the prominent use of imagery or the self-assertion against other authorities. Two of Katharina Volk's four criteria for determining didactic poetry (see Introduction) have been particularly evident: an "explicit didactic intent" and the construction of a "teacher-student constellation" between Quintilian and Geta. We have also seen the "(poetic) self-consciousness" programmatically stated at *Inst.* 3.1.3-4 in reference to the Lucretian simile of the honey rim on the medicine cup: Quintilian claims a highly self-aware use of language that supports his didactic

intent. In this section, I will turn to Volk's last criterion, "poetic simultaneity". Quintilian is, of course, writing in prose, but nonetheless, this criterion can also be applied fruitfully: throughout the work, he conveys the impression of the linear progress of the work, which requires a linear reader to be fully appreciated and develops simultaneously to the potential pupil's life 'outside' the work. This supports his claim that the *Institutio* is a thought-through whole, gradually increasing in difficulty. First, I will show how a sense of progression is conveyed in the first chapters on the young child's education. Then, I will turn to Quintilian's discussion of *imitatio*. As Maria Celentano has shown, he envisages two main stages of training and adapts his advice to them.⁷⁸ Finally, I will, without aiming for exhaustiveness, discuss some programmatic passages in which he infuses a sense of progression into the bulk of the *Institutio*.

Right after the *Preface*, Quintilian encourages fathers to take the greatest care in the education of their new-born sons (1.1.1).⁷⁹ If Geta is the official beneficiary of the work, here it becomes clear that a wider audience is intended to 'eavesdrop' on this personal constellation. Then, the various members of the (wealthy) household who will successively rear a child are introduced.⁸⁰ Advice is first given not to the infant himself, but to the persons surrounding him, which supports the illusion of simultaneity: if he were addressed directly, it would make the teacher-pupil constellation implausible.⁸¹ Quintilian famously starts from the nurses, requiring that "their speech should not be faulty" (1.1.4: *ne sit uitiosus sermo*) and relating that Chrysippus had wished for them to be wise.⁸² While adducing the Stoic philosopher as his authority, he shifts the focus by stressing, next to morality, also language.⁸³ Then, he turns to the parents: they should be as educated as possible, or else devote even more care to their child's education (1.1.6-7). The pedagogues should be learned, or acknowledge their ignorance; otherwise, they will be arrogant and "thoroughly teach their stupidity" (1.1.8: *stultitiam suam perdocent*) to the pupil. Quintilian reassures readers that his requests are not excessive considering his aim to educate no less than the (perfect) orator (1.1.10), adding that if all of this cannot be granted, at least one well-educated figure should be around to correct everyone's mistakes (1.1.11). Characteristically, he sketches an ideal environment, but signals his awareness of possible issues.⁸⁴ Providing advice on how to circumvent

⁷⁸ Celentano 2011, 261; Celentano 2020, 92.

⁷⁹ See Whitton 2019, 480 on the echo of Sall. *Jug.* 1.1-3 here and its implications.

⁸⁰ Quintilian cautions that no time should be wasted (*Inst.* 1.1.15-19). See Fögen 2009, 111 on the similar request for an early start of training at Vitruvius' *De arch.* 1.1.11-12.

⁸¹ Compare on the varying addressees in Vitruvius' *De architectura* Romano 2017, 59.

⁸² Cousin 1975, 154 (n. to 1.4 and 1.5) comments that the title of Chrysippus' work is unknown, but that primary education must have been a concern in Stoic philosophy. See also Loth 1898, 28. Quintilian later disagrees with Chrysippus on the acceptability of beating children (1.3.14); at Plut. *Cat. mai.* 20.2-4, Cato is said to deem it unacceptable to beat one's wife and children.

⁸³ The nurses must thus comply with the first stage of education provided by the *grammaticus*, speaking correctly (1.4.2). See Atherton 1998, 219; 229 on this passage and generally on the 'obsession' of Roman educational writers with morality, and Uden 2018, 391 on a similar concern with nurses at Ps-Pl. *Lib. ed.* 4a. See Ax 2011, 7-8 on the structure of the grammatical chapters.

⁸⁴ See Bloomer 2015, 354 on the set of social circumstances Quintilian adumbrates.

them, he shows himself as a practical-minded teacher. A similar balancing act can be seen in the following request that training should start early, but not be too hard:

Nec sum adeo aetatum inprudens ut instandum protinus teneris acerbe putem exigendamque plane operam. Nam id in primis cauere oportebit, ne studia qui amare nondum potest oderit et amaritudinem semel perceptam etiam ultra rudes annos reformidet. (Inst. 1.1.20).

“Nor am I so ignorant of ages [age differences] that I would think that one should immediately press the tender [very young] ones harshly and that work should be demanded plainly. For this must be avoided foremost, that he who cannot yet love his studies should hate them and shrink from the bitterness once tasted even after his early years.”

Young children should not be treated too harshly, lest they should start hating their studies altogether. The metaphorical description of the children, their minds or age as soft or rough, appearing here for the first time, pervades these early chapters. They appear as unhewn and malleable, to be shaped by the didactic figures surrounding him. The process of (physical and intellectual) growth is envisaged as one of progressive hardening.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the metaphor of bitterness connected to excessive effort may perhaps prelude to the later citation of the Lucretian simile discussed above. As at 3.1.4, study is symbolised by something bitter. The impression that the Lucretian image may already be hinted at is supported by the programmatic character of this passage. In the following paragraph, Quintilian self-referentially points back to the announcement at 1 *pr.* 5 that he will discuss even the smallest elements necessary to form the orator:

Parua docemus oratorem instituendum professi, sed est sua etiam studiis infantia, et ut corporum mox fortissimorum educatio a lacte cunisque initium ducit, ita futurus eloquentissimus edidit aliquando uagitum et loqui primum incerta uoce temptauit et haesit circa formas litterarum: nec, si quid discere satis non est, ideo nec necesse est ... minora etiam facilius

⁸⁵ *Tener* appears at *Inst.* 1.2.18; 1.2.26; 1.3.13 (a citation of Verg. *G.* 2.272), 1.8.4; 1.10.34; 1.11.2; 2.2.3; 2.3.10; 2.4.5, again at 12.6.6 on the strengths of the young man. At 2.4.8; 11, 2.6.7, *tener* is used for animals or plants serving as points of comparison. As Loth 1898, 17 writes, the metaphors of wax and of the empty vessel imply that the child's mind is malleable and can absorb information. *Rudis* for a young mind appears e.g. at 1.1.5; 1.1.20; 1.1.36; 1.2.9; 1.8.4; 1.11.2; 3.6.83. Conversely, *erudire* is often used for the educational process. As Amici 2000, 428-30 shows, a student's mind is similarly conceptualised as soft and progressively hardening in Seneca's *Epistles* (e.g. *Ep.* 25.1, 50.4-5); medical vocabulary (*infirmitas*, *macies*, *uitia* vs. *sanitas*, *remedium*) is also applied to it, overlapping with path imagery: the pupil's weakness will be overcome through the didactic voyage (e.g. 1.1.11, 1.2.6). She thereby gives a positive answer to what Bolaffi 1958, 55 formulated as a question, namely whether Quintilian, while criticising Seneca, also appropriates some of his pedagogical thought. Compare Lavery 1980, 151-52 on the metaphor of travel for life in Seneca.

minores percipiunt, et ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari nisi tenera non possunt, sic animos quoque ad pleraque duriores robur ipsum facit. (Inst. 1.1.21-22)

“I, who have promised that the orator should be formed, teach small things, but also studies have their infancy, and as the training of the bodies which will soon be very strong starts from milk and the cradle, so the one who will be a highly eloquent man has at some point emitted a baby-wailing and first attempted to speak with a hesitant voice and got stuck on the shape of letters – nor, if it is not enough to learn something, is it therefore not necessary ... small children also learn the small things more easily, and, just as bodies can only be bent into certain positions when they are tender, so also does strength itself make minds less receptive for a lot of information.”

As in 1 *pr.* 5, he emphasises the smallness of the teachings conveyed, and parallels the child’s physical growth with his intellectual one. He draws our attention to the fact that he is implementing his promise: the future tense (1 *pr.* 5: *non recusabo*) has been replaced by the present tense (*docemus*). The concluding epigram sums up the point: the fact that the knowledge is small and insufficient does not mean that it is not necessary. Conveying basic subject matter, Quintilian lives up to his initial self-representation as a sought-after and knowledgeable but modest teacher who, unlike others, sets his pupils’ benefit before his own reputation for brilliance; and, of course, he (perhaps not-so-modestly) reminds readers that he is doing so.⁸⁶

Quintilian supports his position that the utmost care should be devoted to the young child’s education through an illustrious example:

An Philippus Macedonum rex Alexandro filio suo prima litterarum elementa tradi ab Aristotele summo eius aetatis philosopho uoluisset, aut ille suscepisset hoc officium, si non studiorum initia et a perfectissimo quoque optime tractari et pertinere ad summam credidisset? Fingamus igitur Alexandrum dari nobis, impositum gremio dignum tanta cura infantem (quamquam suus cuique dignus est): pudeatne me in ipsis statim elementis etiam breuia docendi monstrare compendia? (Inst. 1.1.23-24)

“Or would Philip king of the Macedonians have wanted that the earliest stages of training should be taught to his son Alexander by Aristotle, the greatest philosopher of his time, or would he [Aristotle] have accepted this duty, if he had not thought that the beginnings of studies

⁸⁶ Compare *Inst.* 1.1.35 (*circa res tenues moramur*); 1.1.37 (*res modica dictu*). See on *tenuis* ABfahl 1932, 24. The parallel between the child’s body and mind is then drawn further through the analogy built between the elasticity of young bodies and the malleability of young minds (1.1.23); compare *Inst.* 1.12.8-11. Pers. 3.23 (*udum et molle lutum es*) plays with this kind of educational conception: see Kissel 1990, 396-97.

both are best conveyed by all the most outstanding teachers, and that they are relevant for perfection? Let us therefore imagine that Alexander is given to us, that a child deserving so much care is set on our lap (even if for everyone, his own child deserves it): would I be ashamed to indicate, regarding these first elements, even just a brief summary of teaching?”

The implied answer to both rhetorical questions, of course, is negative. The same care ought to be lavished on the prospective orator as on baby Alexander, and it would be foolish to neglect early training. Aristocratic Geta receives a more famous Greek counterpart. Quintilian, one could say, plays with the power of writing to bridge place and time: he anachronistically imagines himself with the long-dead Alexander on his lap in Aristotle’s stead.⁸⁷ Thanks to this biographical information, he can present Aristotle as a predecessor in the domain of elementary training – even if he did not write about it.⁸⁸ This link is particularly fitting since, as we will see in the next section, at 4 *pr.* 3-4 he writes that he has been appointed as a princely educator himself. After thus advertising his treatment of basic knowledge, Quintilian discusses the child’s earliest reading and writing practice. In tune with his emphasis on the gradual nature of progress, he underlines that these first steps should not be rushed, implying this tendency to be widespread, and, conversely, his own advice to be innovative (1.1.25; 28; 30; 32).⁸⁹

In the second chapter, Quintilian treats the next stage of training, his studies with the *grammaticus*. He starts by imagining a young boy crawling off his lap and starting to learn things for real: *Sed nobis iam paulatim ad crescere puer et exire de gremio et discere serio incipiat* (1.2.1: “But let our child now gradually start to grow and to leave the lap and to study in earnest.”). This points back to the little scene with baby Alexander and marks a simultaneous progress: as promised at 1 *pr.* 6, Quintilian is accompanying the child on his journey of physical and intellectual growth. He argues that children should be educated in school, not at home, purporting to engage in a dialogue with an audience, countering various objections: that schools corrupt the children’s morals (1.2.2), that the pupil will benefit more from the undivided attention of a private tutor (1.2.9), and that he could be neglected in school (1.2.15). Reporting and replying to such objections, Quintilian creates a dialogical ductus.⁹⁰ This

⁸⁷ Rood, Atack, and Philips 2020, 395 discuss the idea that exemplary models can coexist, with a sense of anachronism.

⁸⁸ As Gerbrandy 2020, 41 remarks, Quintilian here implicitly identifies himself with Aristotle. See *De or.* 3.141, Plut. *Alex.* 7.2 on this information. Gell. *NA* 9.3.5-6 translates a letter which Philip purportedly sent to Aristotle when Alexander was born: see Beall 1997, 20. See also Nickau 1999, 18 on Cicero presenting himself as the Roman Aristotle, engaging in both rhetoric and philosophy. Quintilian does not hint at the political perception of Philip and Alexander in Cicero as autocrats who put an end to free speech, on which see Bishop 2015, 190.

⁸⁹ See Citti 2018, 12 on the advice at *Inst.* 1.1.37 to increase the child’s memory gradually, and the analogous advice at *Inst.* 11.2.41.

⁹⁰ See Föllinger 2011, 227 on dialogical elements in Aristoteles’ non-dialogical works, miming the dialectical method, and Kraus 2013, 420 on the implicit dialogue between writer and reader in didactic prose, even if the ‘performance’ is a metaphorical one.

enlivens his writing and gives the impression of a widespread interest in his opinions.⁹¹ He then describes the dynamics in the classroom of the *grammaticus* to prove that children profit from learning in a group, particularly because they will strive to surpass each other (1.2.18-29).⁹² In 1.3, he shifts to the perspective of the *grammaticus*, who must evaluate each pupil's talent (1.3.1) and direct his teaching accordingly. Then, Quintilian presents us with one of the earliest and most complete extant treatments of *grammaticae* (*Inst.* 1.4-8) before marking the child's transition from that school to that of the *rhethor* by discussing the additional general education he requires of the future orator (1.10-12; see §3.1.1).⁹³

In book 2, Quintilian first criticises the current habit of keeping pupils too long in the school of the *grammaticus*, men who teach exercises which should belong to the *rhethor* (2.1.1). Then, he describes the dynamics in the classroom of the *rhethor* (2.2) and criticises the view that it is not necessary to seek out the very best *rhethor* for one's child (2.3). As in 1.2, he feigns a dialogical exchange with the public, explicitly referring to his discussion, in the previous book, of the same issues (2.3.10). More specifically, he points back to his description of the emulative spirit between pupils at 1.2.18-29, rejecting the idea that, because pupils will also learn from each other, it is superfluous to choose the best teacher (2.3.11). As in 1 *pr.* 7, he claims control over possible misinterpretations of his text. This is one of many instances (too many to be discussed) in which he points forwards or backwards within his work, showcasing linearity of progress and consistency of thought.⁹⁴ A similar effect is achieved through sailing and path imagery, first introduced in the *Letter to Trypho* and the *Preface*, through which he (most obviously) conveys the impression of a gradual progress, or "didactic plot" (Don Fowler; see Introduction and §3.1.1),⁹⁵ as well as of the orator's progress in a speech.⁹⁶ In the next chapter, we again find the image of the lap, first introduced with young Alexander, in connection with early declamation practice: while pupils should be made to debate on two sides of a question, they should do so "at the teacher's lap" (2.4.15: *ad gremium praeceptoris*), that is, under his supervision,⁹⁷

⁹¹ As Adamietz 1966, 12 observes, Quintilian did not write in the dialogical format of Cicero's rhetorical works, but he adopts it at times. Compare Richlin 2012, 101 on how the relationship between apprentice and role model is dramatized in the dialogue format adapted by Cicero from Plato.

⁹² See Uden 2018, 393-94 on how this argument in favour of schools foreshadows forensic competitiveness: children will learn by striving to surpass each other (*Inst.* 1.2.29). Compare Laing 1920, 526.

⁹³ Ax 2011, 5.

⁹⁴ As Ahlheid 1983, 14 states, such transitional formulae encourage the reader to keep going. To give just a few examples: pointing back, we find the juncture *ut dixi/diximus* 44 times (first at *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 17), *supra dixi/diximus* 29 times (first at 1.5.33), *quod dixi* twice (9.4.108; 10.5.22), *scripsi/scripsimus* twice (5 *pr.* 4; 11.2.36). Pointing forward, we find *dicam* combined e.g. with *suo loco* (1.1.36; 1.8.7) or *alio loco* (4.2.122), also *alio loco* without verb (5.10.60, 5.14.33). See also e.g. 1.5.54; 1.7.1; 1.8.4; 1.8.7; 2.1.10; 2.4.17; 2.15.10; 5.14.29; 8.6.6; 9.3.82; 9.4.122. There are many more such moments in the work, which Ahlheid analyses.

⁹⁵ See Abfahl 1932, 66-69 on sailing and 69-72 on path imagery in the *Institutio*.

⁹⁶ A few examples: at *Inst.* 4.1.62, an orator making mistakes in the proem is compared to a steersman causing an accident when leaving the harbour; at 6.1.52, the epilogue is said to open all the sails of eloquence; at 10.3.7, we are told that sometimes, one may "open one's sails" to writing enthusiasm; at 10.7.1, anyone is dissuaded from pursuing oratory who can only enter a port with "friendly winds", while at 10.7.23, the sailing metaphor signifies the speed of extemporaneous speaking. At 12.11.4, the orator is advised to sail into the harbour (retirement) while his ship is still unscathed. This metaphor for retirement appears also e.g. at Sen. *Dial.* 7.19.1; 10.18.1.

⁹⁷ As Abfahl 1932, 13 says ("übertr[agen]. Leitung").

until they can do more. In the following chapters, he discusses exercises and training practice with the *rhetaor* (2.4-10) before going over to general questions about rhetoric as an art (2.11-21). As in the treatment of *grammaticae* (1.4-9), the sense of temporal progression is weaker here than in the first half of the book.

In the last book of the *Institutio*, Quintilian describes the adult orator's activity (§3.2.1) and then talks about his retirement, recommending that he should retire from the forum before losing his rhetorical powers, and devote himself to teaching the young (12.11.4-6).⁹⁸ As Michael Winterbottom has shown, this is precisely what Quintilian is doing: after retiring, he started writing his great educational work, the *Institutio*.⁹⁹ I will come back to his remarks on retirement, and to their implications for his own authority as a writer, in the next section. By treating the child's early years in the first books of the work, and then his adult activity and retirement in the last, he conveys the impression that he comprises the orator's whole lifespan.

Furthermore, the learning process is conceptualised in two main stages. This appears from the discussion of *imitatio*.¹⁰⁰ *Imitatio* is first introduced as a natural ability of the child: he will automatically absorb whatever he is surrounded by, which is why the nurses should behave and speak well (1.1.5). A double concern with faultless speech and morality also pervades Quintilian's advice on the early practice of reading poetry with the *grammaticus*. The children's minds are still "tender" (*tenerae*), they themselves "rough and ignorant of everything" (*rudibus et omnium ignavis*), which is why they "should learn not only what is learned, but rather what is honourable" (1.8.4: *non modo quae diserta sed uel magis quae honesta sunt discant*). Accordingly, Quintilian comments, it is a good practice to start reading poetry from Homer and Vergil, even though to fully understand their virtues "one needs a more consolidated judgement" (*firmiore iudicio opus est*). This is not a problem because children will read these texts repeatedly. Meanwhile, their mind will be drawn higher by the "sublimity of the heroic poem" (*sublimitate heroi carminis*), their spirit be emboldened through the "greatness of these things" (*magnitudine rerum*) and "be soaked" (*inbuatur*) with the best things (1.8.5).¹⁰¹ That is, a pupil should first be confronted with the loftiest style and content. The metaphor of soaking presents him as passively absorbing, while the juncture *firmiore iudicio* shows how the process of physical and intellectual 'hardening' is tied to the development of judgement. Growing older, he will 'harden' physically and mentally, becoming selective instead of automatically internalizing information. Other poetic genres and authors should be added progressively (1.8.7-8) once he has developed judgement. This advice shows a normative conception of good style: reading only Homer and Vergil at first will shape the

⁹⁸ See Winterbottom 2005, 177 on the idea of productive retirement at Cic. *De or.* 1.255, and on Cicero himself envisaging retirement at *Brut.* 8.

⁹⁹ Winterbottom 2005, 181.

¹⁰⁰ This is stated most clearly by Celentano 2011, 261, as already said.

¹⁰¹ See Berardi 2017, 161 on the ethical motivation of Quintilian's advice on early reading. Compare the parodical scene in Juv. 6.435-40, where the "more serious" (*grauior*) woman recites Vergil and Homer at dinner.

pupil's *iudicium*; consequently, he will apply the principles derived from them to other authors.¹⁰² The two poets are 'canonical' in the narrow sense that they set the standard after which other authors will be evaluated. Similar advice is given about early prose reading with the *rhetor*, as I will discuss in §2.2.1.

Imitatio is again treated as a part of the advanced student's training in book 10. The goal of the book is announced as allowing him to reach "steady fluency in speaking" (10.1.1: *dicendi ... firma ... facilitas*). At the start of the chapter, Quintilian announces a change in didactic strategy, shifting the attention from a less to a more advanced and independent student:

Sed ut perueniri ad summa nisi ex principiis non potest, ita procedente iam opere [iam] minima incipiunt esse quae prima sunt. Verum nos non quomodo sit instituendus orator hoc loco dicimus (nam id quidem aut satis aut certe uti potuimus dictum est), sed athleta qui omnis iam perdidicerit a praeceptore numeros quo genere exercitationis ad certamina praeparandus sit. (Inst. 10.1.4)

"But as one cannot reach the top if not [starting from] the beginning, so, as the work proceeds, the teachings which came first start being least important. But here I do not say how the orator must be educated (for about this, I have said either enough or certainly as much as I could), but through what kind of exercise the athlete who has already learnt all the movements from his trainer should be prepared for contests."

The parenthetical disclaimer maintains Quintilian's characteristic pretence of modesty.¹⁰³ He marks a change of focus from the pupil as a recipient of the information conveyed by the teacher to an independent agent who, having internalised it, can engage in training independently.¹⁰⁴ The athletic allegory sets the agonistic situation, that is, forensic action, in view. At 2.8.3-9, Quintilian had compared the teacher to a *palaestricus* ("wrestling-teacher") who evaluates his pupils' physiques and trains them accordingly.¹⁰⁵ The young boy of book 2, instructed by a trainer, has now grown, as the *Institutio* has progressed, into a young man approaching his first forensic 'fights', independently engaging in training. Both reading and writing exercises are key for achieving fluency (10.1.1).¹⁰⁶ To inform his practice of

¹⁰² The development of *iudicium* is one main aim of the discussion of *imitatio*: see on this Taekema 2003, 260.

¹⁰³ Compare *Inst.* 3 *pr.* 1; 12.11.8.

¹⁰⁴ See on this change of strategy Fantham 1995, 128-30 and Raschieri 2017, 348. Following modern pedagogy, Quintilian shifts from a 'transmission' to an 'apprenticeship' perspective: Pratt 2002, 5. Compare Beall 1997, 216 on how Aulus Gellius, when presenting translations in the *NA*, complies with the advice of Cicero, Quintilian and Pliny (*De or.* 1.155, *Inst.* 10.5.2-3, *Ep.* 7.9.2) to engage in *exercitatio* as an adult.

¹⁰⁵ See Abfahl 1932, 39 on this comparison.

¹⁰⁶ See Murphy 2003, 248 on the connection established between writing, reading, speaking and listening, and Bloomer 2015, 354 on the importance attributed to imitation and writing exercises. Gibson 2012, 216 writes that Pliny sets up a manifesto of studiousness, variety, balance and hard work in his *Letters* that echoes Quintilian's advice. For Raschieri 2017, 346, the advice at *Inst.* 10.1.21 does not necessarily exclude hearing the text, instead of reading it (however, Quintilian writes *legendus* at 10.1.20).

imitation, Quintilian famously presents a selection of Greek and Latin writers on poetry, historiography, philosophy, and rhetoric (10.1.43-131).¹⁰⁷ There is an explicit shift from precepts to (literary) examples, from teacher to orator: *quae doctor praecepit, orator ostendit* (10.1.15: “what the teacher taught, the orator demonstrates”).¹⁰⁸ He proleptically clarifies that the overview does not aim for completeness (10.1.45).¹⁰⁹ While delineating the key points of potential students’ literary horizons, he performs the kind of evaluation that he expects them to engage in – teaching by example.

In 10.2, Quintilian then gives theoretical precepts on *imitatio*.¹¹⁰ He underlines the importance of *iudicium*: imitation makes improvement easier, but *nisi caute et cum iudicio adprehenditur nocet* (10.2.3: “unless grasped cautiously and with judgement, it causes damage”). Herein lies a main difference between the discussions of early and of advanced *imitatio*: early imitation practice must create *iudicium* through the reading of canonical authors, advanced imitation practice presupposes it.¹¹¹ Students should not imitate a single model, but choose a variety of authors, and then select the best features within them (10.2.14).¹¹² For one cannot surpass a predecessor by just following him (10.2.10; see §1.1.1).¹¹³ It is mostly easier to do more than achieve the same, and the greatest qualities of an orator elude imitation: *Adde quod ea quae in oratore maxima sunt imitabilia non sunt, ingenium, inuentio, uis, facilitas et quidquid arte non traditur* (10.2.12: “Add that what is greatest in an orator is not imitable, his talent, his ability to find material, forcefulness and fluency, and whatever is not conveyed by art”). This statement is puzzling at first but may be said to have a proleptic function. If the student’s training practice as well as his talent contribute to determining educational success, then education is a collaborative venture, and credit or blame for didactic success or failure do not belong exclusively to the teacher. This seems particularly relevant in view of the ambitiousness of Quintilian’s didactic goal: even if the perfect orator will not come into being, this will not undermine his authority as a teacher.

¹⁰⁷ See Calboli Montefusco 1996, 619, Murphy 1998, 145 or Bloomer 2015, 354 generally on the importance which Quintilian attributes to *imitatio*, and Baier 2017, 50 on *utilitas* as a central criterion of Quintilian’s overview.

¹⁰⁸ It is presupposed here that the pupil has already internalized these *praecepta*: see Schneider 1983, 117.

¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in *Inst.* 10.1.56-57, Quintilian envisages possible criticism for his selection of Greek poets and makes clear that he is neither unaware of nor rejects the authors he omits. See Assmann 1988, 12 on the notion of collective memory as the shared knowledge of a group, which determines its cultural framework and identity. We find a similar disclaimer at *Dion. Hal. Dem.* 8.

¹¹⁰ In the other chapters of book 10, Quintilian treats various elements of advanced training, starting from writing practice (*Inst.* 10.3). The exercises he suggests gradually increase in difficulty, as Schneider 1983, 119 discusses.

¹¹¹ The importance of *iudicium* is again emphasised at *Inst.* 10.2.14. It can also be a criterion for literary critical evaluation: Vergil is praised for aptly using *humilitas* and *antiquitas* (8.3.19; 24).

¹¹² See on this Van den Berg 2014, 249; Fögen 2000, 156-57.

¹¹³ See Russell 1979, 4 on this notion that a copy is worse than the model. Compare *Inst.* 11.3.91. The Platonizing character of this idea appears from the ensuing comparisons recalling the allegory of the cave (*Resp.* 514a-520a) and the critique of theatre (*Resp.* 606c): a shadow is lesser than the body, a painting than the actual face, and actors’ performances than true emotions (*Inst.* 10.2.11). See on Plato’s critique of *mimesis* Erler 2013, 374 or Erler 2013a, 60. See Peterson 1891, 84 on Quintilian’s insistence on the notion that one should not just replicate predecessors.

Another reason to select various authors, instead of following only one, is that even the greatest ones sometimes commit mistakes (10.2.14-15).¹¹⁴ The idea that one should not limit oneself to imitating the best author is later reiterated: *Sed non qui maxime imitandus, et solus imitandus est* (10.2.25: “But the one who should be imitated most is not, also, the only one who should be imitated”). The epigram stands out through the repetition of the gerundive underlining the opposition between *maxime* and *solus*.¹¹⁵ This emphatic formulation, while giving the impression that this is not the most common point of view, recalls Sen. *Controv.* 1 *pr.* 6: *Non est unus, quamvis praecipuus sit, imitandus, quia numquam par fit imitator auctori* (“Not one single author should be imitated, regardless of how outstanding he is, because the imitator never equals the model”).¹¹⁶ Here, as elsewhere, Quintilian seems to be drawing on Seneca without citing him. The positions of Seneca the Younger or Cicero are less similar. In *Ep.* 84, Seneca uses the production of honey to convey the composite nature of learning (*Ep.* 84.5).¹¹⁷ Then, he introduces the image of a choir for the creation of a whole out of different elements, but specifies that he is thinking about the sort of small-sized choir of old times, not one of the huge contemporary ones (*Ep.* 84.10). This resonates with the admonition directed to Lucilius elsewhere to focus on a small number of good books (*Ep.* 2.2; 45.1).¹¹⁸ This corresponds to Quintilian’s advice for young, rather than for advanced students. As for Cicero, Antonius at *De or.* 2.90-98 highlights the importance of the *tirocinium fori* and of following one authoritative model, which is quite the opposite of what is recommended to advanced students in the *Institutio*. However, Quintilian may be said to comply with Antonius’ advice in underlining the importance of imitation and exercise.¹¹⁹ What distinguishes his discussion of imitation from that of his predecessors is that he presents different advice according to the different stages of training.¹²⁰ At *Inst.* 10.2.17, he again points back to book 2, even more obviously than at 10.1.1. He tells the student to choose models that best suit his own talent (10.2.17); in book 2,

¹¹⁴ This idea recalls Cicero’s remark about Demosthenes, reported at Plut. *Cic.* 24.4, that he sometimes ‘nods’ (ἀπονοσῳάζειν). It is already expressed at *Inst.* 10.1.24-25, precisely in reference to Cicero’s remark (frg. *Ep.* 9a.4); see also *Orat.* 104. Compare the analogous stance on Homer at Hor. *Ars P.* 359.

¹¹⁵ Compare Fantham 1978b, 5 on Antonius’ advice at *De or.* 2.90 to imitate only the best features of a model.

¹¹⁶ See Sussman 1972, 208 or Berti 2007, 22-23 on Seneca’s conception of *imitatio* and his intent to set bad models next to good ones. Fairweather 1981, 28 points out the similarity between Quintilian’s and Seneca’s conceptions of *imitatio*. Compare Chaplin 2000, 13; 197 on Livy in *pr.* 10 announcing that he will present both positive and negative *exempla*. As Mazzoli 2020, 89 writes, the fact that Quintilian at *Inst.* 9.2.42 cites *Seneca in controuersiis* shows that he expects readers to know which of the Senecas wrote about *controuersiae*.

¹¹⁷ Seneca in *Ep.* 84.8 and Quintilian in *Inst.* 10.1.19 both use the image of digestion: see Fantham 1978a, 110.

¹¹⁸ Compare Sen. *Dial.* 9.9.5 on the 40 000 books that once were in the library of Alexandria serving display, not true learning; see on this Caputi 2000, 119.

¹¹⁹ The issue of choosing various models is absent from Cicero, as Fantham 1978a, 107 writes. See Leeman 1963, 119 on the importance attributed to *imitatio* in the *De oratore*, and on Antonius’ character Mankin 2011, 31-32. See Fantham 2004, 98-101 on Sulpicius figuring as a model pupil and on the difference from Isocrates’ stance (*C. soph.* 18; *Antid.* 205-6) being that pupils should choose different models, rather than teachers adapt strategies to the pupils’ talents. The teacher should indicate a model, as Antonius does: see Leeman et al. 1981, 301. Compare Plin. *Ep.* 1.2.2-4, where Pliny claims to imitate different authors. Quintilian at *Inst.* 10.5.19 also speaks about an apprenticeship in the forum, but by his time it was less important than school training: Richlin 2012, 98. See Whitton 2019, 72-73 on the nostalgic tone of this passage and the analogous discussion at Plin. *Ep.* 8.14.5.

¹²⁰ Quintilian in book 10 reiterates much of the training advice given in books 1-2, but for advanced students: see Murphy 2003, 248.

he had advised the teacher on which models to choose according to each child's talent (with the caveat that the truly gifted student will not need such selection).¹²¹ Now, the grown student should himself "consider his strengths" (10.2.19: *consulat suas vires*) when choosing models. Quintilian adds:

Atque ego illi praeceptori quem institueram in libro secundo credidi non ea sola docenda esse ad quae quemque discipulorum natura compositum uideret: nam is et adiuuare debet quae in quoque eorum inuenit bona et quantum fieri potest adicere quae desunt et emendare quaedam et mutare. (Inst. 10.2.20)

"And I thought that the teaching not only of those things to which the disposition of each pupil seemed to him most prone by nature should be entrusted to that teacher whom I established in the second book: for he must both enhance those good qualities which he finds in each of them, and, as far as he can, add what is lacking, and correct and change some things."

This is an obvious instance in which Quintilian signals that he is counting on a linear reader, who will not just have chipped in, but have read the whole thing and thus remember what he wrote in book 2. In 2.3.10-11, he corrected a possible misinterpretation of a stance he had taken in 1.2.18-29. Here, he refers back to advice given to the *rhetor* in 2.8.13 about how to take into consideration different dispositions of pupils in training.¹²² Once again, he claims control over the reception of his text. This is also an explicit acknowledgement of the fact that in the *Institutio*, he not only addresses readers (fathers, members of the *familia*, teachers, pupils), but also conjures up certain figures and their interactions. The young (ideal) pupil is shown in interaction with his (ideal) teachers and is later drawn as the (ideal) adult orator (§3.2.1-3). By presenting such exemplary figures in a didactic constellation, Quintilian presents their image as models for all those individuals who may strive to implement his vision in the real world. The explicit link established between the two books points to the progress which is supposed to have happened 'in between', thus supporting the impression of simultaneity between teaching and learning. Now, it is the student himself, not the teacher, to manage his imitation practice, the success of which depends on whether his teachers (like the ideal teacher of book 2) will have trained him well.

But what has happened 'in between'? In the bulk of the work, Quintilian follows the established division of the subject matter into the five parts of rhetoric. However, he also infuses a sense of linearity and progression into this framework, thus fitting it into his didactic programme. This sense is created in various ways. As already mentioned, travel imagery and pointers backwards or forwards to subject matter already or not yet discussed pervade the work. There are also instances in which the reader must

¹²¹ Cf. Cic. *De or.* 3.36 on Isocrates applying different strategies with Ephorus and Theopompus. Quintilian refers to this anecdote at *Inst.* 2.8.11 and 10.1.74. See Fantham 1978, 13 on how this anecdote at Cic. *De or.* 3.36 and *Brut.* 204 exemplifies the need for flexibility in teaching. Sen. *Dial.* 9.6.4 similarly mentions Isocrates and Ephorus.

¹²² Peterson 1891, 89.

be aware of an earlier passage for full appreciation of a later one. A good example is the repeated citation of Verg. *Aen.* 8.728 at *Inst.* 8.6.11 and 12.10.61. At 8.6.11, Quintilian illustrates the kind of metaphor in which sentience and agency are attributed to an inanimate thing, which he defines as the most audacious and vivid kind, by citing Vergil's description of the river Araxes: *pontem indignatus Araxes* ("Araxes, indignant about being bridged"). At 12.10.61, he exploits it for his definition of the grand style. After describing the plain style as apt for narrating and mostly devoid of ornament (12.10.59) and the middle style as more ornate and "like a stream which is rather gentle and shining, but shadowed on both sides by banks full of vegetation" (12.10.60: *lenior tamquam amnis et lucidus quidem sed uirentibus utrimque ripis inumbratus*), he characterizes the grand style thus: *At ille qui saxa deuoluat et 'pontem indignetur' et ripas sibi faciat multus et torrens iudicem uel nitentem contra feret, cogetque ire qua rapiet* (12.10.61: "But that which may overturn rocks and "will spurn the bridge" and will, in flood, create his own banks and, torrential, carry off the judge even if he strives against it, and force him to go where he leads him"). Quintilian shifts from a purely explanatory mode for the subtle style to a mixed mode for the middle style (explanatory and allegorical), and finally to a purely allegorical one for the grand style. It may be an exaggeration to adapt Alexander Pope's words on Longinus and say that Quintilian "is himself that great sublime he draws";¹²³ but it is remarkable that instead of giving a definition of the grand style, he gives an example of it. Fittingly, he integrates the metaphor of *Aen.* 8.728, earlier used to illustrate the most sublime type of metaphors, into his description. The river is now not anymore a 'real' river depicted on the shield, metaphorically *indignatus*, but part of an allegory. The juncture is doubly modified: the subject *Araxes* is left out, the perfect participle *indignatus* is changed to the potential subjunctive *indignetur* to fit it into the new context. The reader is supposed to recognize an increasingly modified Vergilian line; and to fully appreciate *Inst.* 12.10.61, he must remember the appearance of *pontem indignatus Araxes* at 8.6.11.

A sense of gradual progress is created especially in programmatic passages, mostly at the start of the single books, in which Quintilian announces what follows as presupposing, or as more difficult than, what preceded it. Thus, at 4 *pr.* 6, he tells us that the following topics (the parts of the forensic speech, following which the treatment of *inuentio* is structured) are *maiora praeteritis ac magis ardua* ("greater than the ones lying behind and more arduous"). At 5 *pr.* 3-4, he states that his earlier discussions of proem (4.1) and narration (4.2) served as a prelude to that of argumentation in forensic cases, since they prepare the judge for it. At 6.2.1, he remarks that the subject of what follows, moving the judges, is "much more difficult than what was said before" (*supra dictis multo difficilius*); at the end of the chapter, he claims some renown for himself in this domain (6.2.36), thus strengthening his didactic authority by pointing to his proficiency 'outside' the work. In the following chapter, he discusses laughter, a topic he says to be extremely difficult and only aided little by art, as I will discuss later (6.3.1-2; §2.2.2). He devotes another chapter to *altercatio*, for which he equally relativizes the

¹²³ Pope 1965, v. 680.

relevance of art: *Valet autem in altercatione plurimum acumen, quod sine dubio ex arte non uenit (natura enim non docetur), arte tamen adiuuatur* (6.4.12: “In altercation, acumen is the most important thing, which certainly does not come from art (for natural talent cannot be taught) but is aided by art”). A similar statement opens the following chapter, about “judgement”, *iudicium*. Quintilian writes that he is treating the topic so that people may not think he left it out (showcasing both his concern with completeness and with the public’s opinion), but that it is so necessary for every element of the speech that it cannot be discussed separately from single sentences or words, “and that it cannot be taught through art any more than [the sense of] taste or smell” (6.5.1: *nec magis arte traditur quam gustus aut odor*).¹²⁴ He says much the same about *consilium* (6.5.3-4: “strategy”). This both shows that the teacher cannot be made responsible for everything and gives a sense of progress: in books 4 and 5, Quintilian had treated knowledge which was highly technical but could be memorized. Now that he has reached book 6, he introduces topics which, as he underlines, also require taste and experience – which the student progressing in parallel with the work will, ideally (if unrealistically), have gathered ‘by now’.

At 7 *pr.* 1, Quintilian uses an architectural simile to mark his transition from *inuentio* to *dispositio*: as it is not enough for someone building a house to gather all the materials without putting them in order, so in speaking someone will only have a “heap” (*cumulum*), unless he will fit together the materials he gathered (in *inuentio*). This simile recalls 1 *pr.* 4, where he had compared arts of rhetoric neglecting preliminary studies to houses without groundwork, claiming superiority over other writers for the thought-through structure of his work. The message is clear: in a speech as in a treatise, one must follow a definite order, and this is what he is doing. He states that there are no clear-cut rules, since each case will be different. Instead, the orator must have the necessary expertise: *sapiat oportet actor et uigilet et inueniat et iudicet et consilium a se ipso petat* (7 *pr.* 4: “the advocate must be intelligent and vigilant and resourceful and judge and take advice from himself”). This recalls his remarks on the topics he discussed in book 6. Once again, we get a sense of progress: for *iudicium* and *consilium* have just been treated in the preceding chapter. Consistently with the rejection of exact rules, Quintilian starts his treatment of *dispositio* by referring, primarily, to his own experience (and taste).¹²⁵

At 8 *pr.* 1-3, he emphasises the importance of gradual progress. Shortly after, he again advertises increasing difficulty: *Plus exigunt laboris et curae quae secuntur* (8 *pr.* 13: “What follows requires more effort and diligence”); for *elocutio* is the “most difficult” (*difficillimam*) part of the job. And in the discussion of the different types of metaphor, we read: *Sed iam non pueris praecipimus, ut accepto genere species intellegere non possint* (8.6.13: “But now, I am not teaching small children anymore, who could not understand the sort, having been told the kind”). Progress, Quintilian reminds us, is made not only in the work, but also by the students who, ideally, are growing in parallel with it. At 9.1.1, he remarks that he devoted the last book to tropes and will now turn to figures.

¹²⁴ *Urbanitas* had earlier been described as a *gustum urbis* at *Inst.* 6.3.17; see §2.2.2.

¹²⁵ Often in the imperfect, underlining the long duration of his experience: e.g. *Inst.* 7.1.4 (*Erat mihi curae...*); 7.1.23 (*Solebam...*); 7.1.29 (*Solebam...*); 7.1.31 (*Solebam...*).

By the time author and reader have reached book 10, the pupil within (and ideally also outside) the work has become independent and receives instructions for independent training. Before treating memory (11.2) and performance (11.3), Quintilian treats “aptness” (11.1: *aptum*), again a difficult skill requiring experience (see §§2.1.1; 2.2.2). The last book starts with a further change of gears: *Ventum est ad partem operis destinati longe grauissimam* (12.1.1: “We have reached the part of the envisaged work which is by far the most difficult”).¹²⁶ Here, we will encounter the orator engaging in forensic activity (see §3.2.1) – the infant of book 1 has become an adult.

But is Quintilian talking himself (and fellow teachers) out of his job? And why? He is, but for good reasons.¹²⁷ On the one hand, as I suggested above, by presenting the educational process as a collaborative venture, he strengthens the authority of his didactic persona: even if nobody in the real world reaches perfection, this will not mean that he failed as a teacher. On the other hand, his praxis-oriented approach is a key point of his self-representation from the *Preface* onwards: while other didactic figures leave out essential elements of training while simultaneously focusing on uselessly detailed knowledge, he announces a work which will select all essential information and gradually lead the pupil through a training programme which will make an orator (and potentially even the ideal orator) out of him. Talking himself out of his job contributes to the authority of his didactic persona as a man who is not confined to the walls of his school but has experience of the real world. This stance is formulated most poignantly in a rhetorical question at *Inst.* 2.5.13: *Nam quid aliud agimus docendo quam ne semper docendi sint?* (“For what else do we achieve through teaching than that they [pupils] may not always have to be taught?”).¹²⁸ A real teacher should want to make himself redundant, teaching is only successful if it comes to an end, and this is what poor teachers fail to grasp. Quintilian’s consistent advertising of the linear progress of the work, and of the simultaneous, gradual progress of the student he imagines within (and, ideally, outside) it, is an essential part of his didactic construct.

1.2.2 “Simultaneity” Between Text and Life

In the *Letter to Trypho* and in the *Preface*, Quintilian refers to friends and acquaintances, projecting an image of himself ‘outside’ the work as a busy man. His professional experience in the real world – as he draws it – establishes his authority within the work. We have seen in the last section that he creates the sense of a gradual, simultaneous progress of text and pupil. He similarly draws parallels between the development of the text and of his own life, which in turn support the impression of a narrative developing gradually, as it were in ‘real time’.

In the *Letter to Trypho*, Quintilian starts from the chronological endpoint: he has just finished writing the *Institutio*, reaching the end of the trajectory which readers will start witnessing from the

¹²⁶ Ahlheid 1983, 38.

¹²⁷ See Terrill 2016, 163 on Quintilian’s rather surprising stance that not everything can be taught, and on *imitatio* providing the key to overcoming this issue.

¹²⁸ See Loth 1898, 36 on Quintilian’s intent to create independent pupils. Compare *Inst.* 1.11.19.

Preface onwards. At the start of the *Preface*, then, he informs us that he started writing as soon as he retired (1.1.1). This makes the busyness he claimed in the *Letter to Trypho* for the two years in which he wrote the work even more impressive: even as a retired man, he is in high demand. The second time he opens a substantial window onto his ‘real’ life is in the preface to book 4. As in 1 *pr.* 6, he addresses Marcellus Vitorius (4 *pr.* 1), and tells him that he was entrusted with the education of Domitian’s heirs:

*Cum uero mihi Domitianus Augustus sororis suae nepotum delegauerit curam, non satis honorem iudiciorum caelestium intellegam nisi ex hoc oneris quoque magnitudinem metiar. Quis enim mihi aut mores excolendi sit modus, ut eos non inmerito probauerit sanctissimus censor, aut studia, ne fefellisse in iis uidear principem ut in omnibus, ita in eloquentia quoque eminentissimum? (Inst. 4 *pr.* 2-3)*

“But since Domitianus Augustus has entrusted me with the care of his sister’s grandsons, I would not understand the honour of divine judgement well enough should I not also measure from this the greatness of my burden. For how shall I train morality¹²⁹ in such a way that the very censor can approve of it not unrightly, or literary studies in such a way that I shall not appear to have let down, regarding them, the *princeps* who, as in everything, is most outstanding also in his eloquence?”

He is loaded with an additional burden to the one he had taken up in the preface (1 *pr.* 3: *oneris*), an even greater and more honorific one: the education of Domitian’s heirs. He must now live up to such an illustrious judge.¹³⁰ At *Inst.* 10.1.91-92, we find again high praise of Domitian’s literary achievements. Scholars have discussed these tributes to the emperor, proposing different hypotheses about Quintilian’s stance towards him: they range from abject flattery, to a routine homage to the ruler, to detachment and subtle subversiveness.¹³¹ I will not add to the debate, and take an agnostic stance on

¹²⁹ Russell 2001, vol. 4, 177 takes the morality and the studies to be Quintilian’s own. However, I think that this would not fit with Quintilian’s persona as an old man who is presenting his definitive views on rhetoric and education in the *Institutio* (see on this §2.1.2).

¹³⁰ See Ahlheid 1983, 53 on how Quintilian worries about Domitian’s judgement. Compare Morello 2011, 152; 159 on Pliny representing Titus as a polymath and kindred spirit in the preface to the *HN*. At *HN pr.* 3, he also calls Titus *censorius*.

¹³¹ Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 8 regrets that Quintilian fell into such flattery. For Peterson 1891, xi, Quintilian’s flattery of Domitian is a “stain” on his character; for Austin 1948, xvi, it is normal court behaviour. McDermott and Orentzel 1979, 15; 19 think that it is genuine and (unconvincingly) suggest a date of publication after Domitian’s death. Coleman 1986, 3110 argues that the belated address shows that Quintilian was in no danger of offending Domitian by omitting to flatter him at the very beginning, and that it may have been in Domitian’s interest to foster that image; she suggests that Quintilian was not so closely monitored as to be forced to extravagant praise. For La Penna 2003, 155-56; 160, there is little reason to doubt Quintilian’s gratitude towards the emperor, while the compliments he pays to his eloquence may be partly due to literary convention. Fernández López 2010, 320 writes that Domitian’s campaign of moral reform must have appealed to Quintilian and rejects the notion of servility on the grounds that Quintilian does not dedicate his work to Domitian and restricts his praise to three passages (3.7.9; 4 *pr.* 2-5; 10.1.91-92). Rather differently, Ahl 1984, 197-203 reads Quintilian’s advice on irony as an indicator that figured speech could and should be used to criticise imperial power. Penwill

this issue.¹³² Instead, I will highlight that, regardless of Quintilian's opinion of the emperor, his tributes to him convey authority to his own persona as a teacher, and to his project as a whole. On the one hand, Domitian is enlisted, together with Trypho, Marcellus, and the crowd of anonymous friends and students, in the group of supporters who hold Quintilian and his work in high esteem. On the other, his morality and eloquence match the twofold proficiency, moral and rhetorical, of the orator Quintilian sets out to educate, and his role as *censor* serves as a prelude to the fact that the orator is later defined through a maxim adopted from Cato the Elder – the most famous *censor* of all (12.1.1; §3.1.1).¹³³ Domitian is shown to be in harmony with this vision of the ideal orator, sanctioning Quintilian's project as aligned with official thought, and thus as inherently 'Flavian'.¹³⁴ Indeed, making Quintilian the educator of his heirs, he gives him the power to shape the minds of Rome's future rulers (had their father Flavius Clemens not fallen into disgrace). In the last chapter of the thesis (§§4.2.1-2), I will suggest that Quintilian may be contraposing his own, Flavian project, to the Neronian past of Seneca the Younger, presenting contemporary rhetorical corruption as an anachronistic residue of the past.

And again, in the preface to book 6, Quintilian addresses Marcellus Vitorius and informs readers about a major twist his life, this time of a private nature:

Haec, Marcelle Vitori, ex tua uoluntate maxime ingressus, tum si qua ex nobis ad iuuenes bonos peruenire posset utilitas, nouissime paene etiam necessitate quadam officii delegati mihi sedulo laborabam, respiciens tamen illam curam meae uoluptatis, quod filio, cuius eminens ingenium sollicitam quoque parentis diligentiam merebatur, hanc optimam partem relicturus hereditatis uidebar, ut, si me, quod aecum et optabile fuit, fata interceptissent, praeceptore tamen patre uteretur. At me fortuna id agentem diebus ac noctibus festinantemque metu meae mortalitatis ita subito prostrauit ut laboris mei fructus ad neminem minus quam ad me pertineret. Illum enim de quo summa conceperam, et in quo spem unicum senectutis reponeram, repetito uulnere orbitatis amisi. (Inst. 6 pr. 1-2)

2000, 72-75 argues that Quintilian's praise of Domitian is ironical, *inter alia* because it occurs after the evaluation of Lucan (and would recall Lucan's extravagant flattery of Nero BC 1.33-66) and shortly before that of satire. For Roche 2009, 385, the very fact that it is unclear whether Quintilian's praise is sincere means that his words are a defiant gesture in an autocratic context.

¹³² As Adamietz 1986, 2231-33 writes, while it is clear that Quintilian entertained good relations to the Flavian court, there is not enough information about Quintilian's private views on Domitian. He compares Quintilian's concentration on rhetorical teaching to the retirement from public life which Tacitus praises in his father-in-law.

¹³³ See Astin 1978, 78; 91-94 on the prestige of the censorship and Cato's strictness, particularly in his attempts to curb luxury. Cass. Dio 67.4.3 remarks that Domitian was the only man ever to be voted censor for life.

¹³⁴ Lana 1990, 287; 309 argues that Quintilian's ideal is conform to the morality projected by the Flavians and reads the *Institutio* as an attempt to grant a theoretical basis for the collaboration between orator and emperor. Roche 2009, 367 similarly argues that Quintilian's self-representation as modest and hard-working is highly adapted to the Flavian emphasis on simplicity and hard work. For Ahlheid 1983, 53, Domitian embodies Quintilian's ideal.

“Although I started, Marcellus Vitorius, this work chiefly on your bidding, and also in case I could be of some use to good youths, most recently I was working diligently not least also because of the challenge posed by the task I have been entrusted with; however, I was considering this task also my own pleasure, since I thought I was going to leave behind this work as the best of his inheritance to my son, whose outstanding talent deserved even anxious attention from a father – so that, if death should snatch me away, which would have been right and desirable, he could still profit from his father as a teacher. But, as I was doing this and hurrying night and day because of my fear of my own mortality, fortune suddenly laid me prostrate in such a way that the fruit of my work should belong to nobody less than to myself. For I lost the one of whom I had the highest hopes, and on whom I set the only hope for my old age, in a repeated blow of bereavement.”

Quintilian reiterates his self-presentation as a diligent and hard-working man first introduced at the start of the work, and creates a sense of progression through the references back to the prefaces to books 1 and 4.¹³⁵ He recalls that he set out to write at Marcellus’ request, showing that he was, indeed, writing, intent on holding his word (1 *pr.* 6: *festinabo*), and reminds us of the honorific task assigned to him by Domitian. Additionally, for the first time, he adds a private motivation for his undertaking, the intent to educate his son even after his own death: he was bequeathing to him a didactic image of himself. The *Institutio* appears as a testament.¹³⁶ This is Quintilian’s most explicit statement about his construction, in the *Institutio*, of an image of himself as an exemplary teacher: his persona is a satisfactory replacement of its flesh-and-blood author, enough so as to educate his son (and the ideal orator). ‘Quintilian’ will not die but live on through his work. Accordingly, he stresses that he is not afraid of death, showcasing both his fortitude and his preoccupation with leaving behind a coherent, authoritative work as advertised in the *Preface*: interruption would mean fragmentation, and frustrate his claim to future memory. Then comes the sudden change of situation, marked by the strong adversative *at*.¹³⁷ Through his son’s passing, any private motivation was taken away from him. Now, his writing benefits only others – Marcellus Vitorius and Geta, Domitian and his grandnephews, the crowd of friends, and all his other contemporary and future readers. The next paragraph clarifies why the blow of bereavement was a “repeated” one:

¹³⁵ Ahlheid 1983, 42 remarks on the sense of intimacy created by the addresses to Marcellus Vitorius. As Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 1, 7 notes, Vitorius is also addressed at Stat. *Silv.* 4.4.

¹³⁶ See Bernstein 2008, 215 on how Quintilian endeavours to present his son with his didactic voice even in the case of his own death. Seneca at *Ep.* 61.1-2 also points out his approaching death: see Edwards 2019, 9. See Carruthers 2008, 11 on *memoria* also signifying the process by which a work of literature becomes institutionalized within the language and pedagogy of a group.

¹³⁷ See Cairns 2014, 118 on the prominence of the theme of the mutability of fortune already in the encounter between Priam and Achilles in *Il.* 24.525ff.

Quid nunc agam? Aut quem ultra esse usum mei dis repugnantibus credam? Nam ita forte accidit ut eum quoque librum quem de causis corruptae eloquentiae emisi iam scribere adgressus ictu simili ferirer. Vnum igitur optimum fuit, infaustum opus et quidquid hoc est in me infelicium litterarum super immaturum funus consumpturis uiscera mea flammis inicere neque hanc impiam uiuacitatem nouis insuper curis fatigare. (Inst. 6 pr. 3)

“What shall I do now? Or what use should I think I have anymore, if the gods fight against me? For it happened, by chance, that also when I was had started to write the book which I have published ‘On the Causes of Corrupted Eloquence’, I was struck by a similar blow. The one best thing to do, of course, would have been to throw that ill-starred work, and whatever wretched literary ambition I had, onto the flames which were going to consume, on the untimely pyre, my child [lit. entrails], and not to exert my impious vitality on new endeavours.”

His younger son died when he was writing his (now lost) *De causis corruptae eloquentiae*.¹³⁸ From what follows, it emerges that this occurred about four years prior: his younger son died at a mere five years of age (6 pr. 6), and his young wife had died just a few months earlier (6 pr. 5).¹³⁹ After this twofold loss, he set all his hopes on the elder son, who died, at ten years of age, during the composition of the *Institutio* (6 pr. 10). At 6 pr. 3, Quintilian is conjuring up, and rejecting, the act of burning his earlier book together with his younger son, calling him *uiscera*, literally entrails.

Viscera is used, for a dead child, at various points in Seneca’s tragedies, thus by Thyestes when he recognizes “I have eaten up my children [entrails]” (Ag. 27: *uiscera exedi mea*), or by Medea, who speaks of taking revenge on her *uiscera* (Med. 40; 734; 1013).¹⁴⁰ In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Tereus eats *sua uiscera* (Met. 6.651) and the Medea-like Althaea, speaking of Meleager’s log, states that the fire will consume *mea uiscera* (Met. 8.478).¹⁴¹ The latter instance is particularly interesting here, as it is taken up again by Ovid’s exile-persona in Tr. 1.7.19-20: *sic ego non meritos mecum peritura libellos / imposui rapidis viscera nostra rogis* (“so I set the booklets not deserving this, / my child [entrails], on

¹³⁸ Compare the use of *uiuacitas* at *Decl. mai.* 4 pr. 15 by the son who was prophesied to become a parricide and wishes he had died in war, but lived on *foeda uiuacitate*. Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 425 discusses, and rejects, Lipsius’ suggestion that the *De causis* is the *Dialogus, inter alia* because the definition of rhetoric given at *Dial.* 30.5 jars with *Inst.* 2.15.2-13, because (Maternus’) views on the decline of rhetoric at *Dial.* 34.1-37.8 do not match Quintilian’s, and because Cicero is treated irreverently (by Aper) at *Dial.* 22.1-4.

¹³⁹ See Winterbottom 1975, 92 on the declamatory tone of this passage, and Zinsmaier 2003, 158 on how Quintilian, stressing his wife’s young age and adding her to the list of his children, reinforces the trope of the *mors acerba* or *immatura*, regarded as particularly terrible. Ferguson 1979, 75 suggests that Quintilian at Juv. 6.75 may figure not just as an overly serious man, but also as one who married a wife who is too young, without a chance of keeping her faithful.

¹⁴⁰ OLD *uiscera* 3 and 5. Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 427 remarks that this is a poetic word.

¹⁴¹ Zinsmaier 2003, 160 only hints at this possibility, referring to Ov. *Met.* 6.650-51. See Krevans 2010, 207 on how Ovid, claiming to have attempted to burn the *Metamorphoses* at Tr. 1.7.11-16, acts both as the dying poet and as the biographer, and constructs a parallel to Vergil’s purported wish to have the *Aeneid* burnt.

the lively fire to die with me”).¹⁴² In the preceding couplet, Ovid compares himself to Althaea burning the log determining Meleager’s life (*Tr.* 1.7.17-18), and a few lines before, he recommends the *Metamorphoses* as a *maior imago* (*Tr.* 1.7.11: “greater image”) of himself. Ovid envisages his work as a child, literally as a part of his own body. It functions as his image (or ghost) across the divide of space (Rome-Tomis) and time, life and death: in *Tr.* 1.3, he had described his departure from Rome as his funeral.¹⁴³

Quintilian was burning a real child, and mentions book-burning as what he should have done, not as what he attempted to do. However, the proximity of the *uisce* and the lost *De causis* may conjure up, if not Medea and Thyestes, certainly Althaea and Ovid. This would resonate with the notion, introduced earlier, of the *Institutio* as a testament, the carrier of his didactic voice after he dies. The linking of the *De causis* and the *Institutio* with the deaths of his younger and older son suggests that in both, Quintilian is conveying part of ‘himself’ which will survive in a literary form, instead of through his sons. Tying the death of his younger son to his writing of the *De causis*, Quintilian extends the window he opens onto his ‘real self’ to his literary activity and private life predating the *Institutio*, thus enhancing the impression that he is a ‘real man’ who has lived a long and full life. .

The fact that the older son was more, the younger less advanced in his studies also corresponds to the respective status of the *Institutio* and the *De causis*: the *Institutio* is his great, definitive work, the *De causis* the smaller work preceding it, which however is not dismissed, but similarly claimed authorship for. Thus, in the concluding sentence of book 8 – a prominent position likely to be seen even by a distracted reader flicking through the work – Quintilian points to the *De causis* for a fuller treatment of the fault of *cacozelia*, “affectation” (8.6.76).¹⁴⁴ Earlier, at the end of a juicy invective against contemporary declamatory style, which he compares to castration, he similarly points to it for a fuller treatment (5.12.23; §4.2.3). These remarks differentiate the *De causis* from other works circulating under his name, which he disavows. As already seen, he dismisses an *Ars rhetorica* (1 *pr.* 6).¹⁴⁵ Later, he says that he published a speech in favour of one Naevius Arpinianus, but belittles it by remarking that he was “led by a youthful desire for fame” (7.2.24: *ductum iuuenali cupiditate gloriae*), adding that other speeches circulating under his name have been corrupted by those noting them down and preserve little of the original.¹⁴⁶ He connects no such disclaimers to the *De causis*, but advertises it, indicating that his opinions have not changed. It figures, so to say, as an apotreptic complement to the *Institutio*, in which he describes the sort of style which readers should avoid. As I will discuss in §§4.1.1-3, he recommends to teachers to make use of apotreptic exemplarity, confronting pupils with bad oratory,

¹⁴² See Howley 2017, 217 on the figurative discourse of authors about burning their own books (starting from Catull. 36) as a trope establishing the quality of their writings.

¹⁴³ See esp. Ov. *Tr.* 1.3.23. See OLD *imago* 1 and 5. Creusa’s ghost is famously called *imago* in Verg. *Aen.* 2.773; 793; compare *Aen.* 1.353; 4.654; 6.701. Ov. *Her.* 7.69 echoes Verg. *Aen.* 2.773: see Barchiesi 1993, 339.

¹⁴⁴ Quintilian often gives such apotreptic teaching by lengthily discussing vices, such as *obscuritas* (*Inst.* 8.2.12-21); cf. also esp. 5.7.32 and 8.3.44.

¹⁴⁵ This concern with the uncontrolled circulation of his work to some extent recalls Hor. *Epist.* 1.20.

¹⁴⁶ Quintilian creates the impression of overwhelming public interest for this case: see Roche 2016, 439.

and in the *Institutio* himself denounces bad contemporary style, thereby sharpening the contours of his conceptualisation of good oratory.

Back to Quintilian and his sons. Unlike Ovid, he did not throw his work into the fire. Linking the loss of his younger son and the publication of the *De causis*, he reassures readers that he will keep writing even now, confronted with a further loss.¹⁴⁷ He may also be engaging in a sort of necrological *amplificatio* of Cicero: he lost two sons instead of one daughter, and he curses his *uiuacitas* instead of presenting himself as a sick man searching for consolation in philosophy.¹⁴⁸ Quintilian not only claims to face these disasters bravely, but proves it by completing both works.¹⁴⁹ As Matthew Leigh has shown, his refusal to stop working in grief resonates with traditional Roman *exempla* of bereft fathers.¹⁵⁰ Displaying his virtue, he shows himself as the right teacher for an orator both skilled and upright.

We are presented with a timeline of events taking place shortly before and during the composition of the *Institutio*. About four years back, his wife died, a few months later his younger son, when he was writing the *De causis*. He retired and started writing the *Institutio*. As he was getting started on the fourth book, he was entrusted with the education of Domitian's grandnephews, when on the sixth, his elder son dies. There is a progression from the private to the public sphere. For once his elder son dies, his endeavour does not benefit him privately, and will only be of use for others: for Marcellus Vitorius and his son, Domitian and his heirs, and the public. With nothing to lose, spurred merely by love for the subject and the obligation towards his friends and commissioners, he will write disinterestedly – and thus all the more authoritatively.¹⁵¹

The reports on his two sons' deaths may be said to add a historiographical touch to this preface, in which Quintilian sets a monument to his family and to himself.¹⁵² The position of loss and lack of personal involvement resulting from it corresponds to the aloofness that, as we will see, he ascribes to historians because they are temporally detached from what they describe (10.1.34; §3.2.1). This

¹⁴⁷ For Zinsmaier 2003, 155, there is no reason to doubt that Quintilian had just lost his son, but he expresses this grief artfully, which belies the view held by Seel 1977, 19 that the passage is touching because it is artless (without “Künstelei”). Compare *Inst.* 11.1.53ff. on how a bereaved father should speak.

¹⁴⁸ Plut. *Cic.* 41.5 comments on the excessiveness of Cicero's grief at Tullia's death; so does Livy, according to Sen. *Suas.* 6.22. See Erskine 1997, 38-39 on Cicero's conceptualisation of grief as sickness e.g. at *Att.* 12.14.3; 12.20.1; 12.21.5, on his writing of a lost *Consolatio* to himself and his consolatory letter to a Titius in *Fam.* 5.16, and on the prominence given to grief in the *Tusculanae disputationes*.

¹⁴⁹ See Wilson 1997, 49-51; 60 on the different approaches which Seneca takes to consolation in *Ep.* 63 (sympathetic and admitting to his own grief at the death of a friend) and 99 (attacking Marullus for his lack of self-control). As Wilson writes, excessive grieving carries the implication of being unmanly, unworthy of a Roman man. See also Ash 2018, 135 on the negative example of Nero not controlling his emotions in happiness or grief at Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.2-3, vs. Agricola's exemplary silent mourning of his son at *Agr.* 29.1. See also Plut. *Cic. mai.* 24.6 on Cato reportedly having borne his son's death philosophically, without neglecting public duties, or Sen. *Dial.* 9.15.6 on grieving moderately.

¹⁵⁰ Leigh 2004, 140. See also Bloomer 2015, 356 on Quintilian's philosophical virtues being on display, and Celentano 2003, 127 on how Quintilian wishes to leave behind an image of himself as a model of behaviour.

¹⁵¹ At *Inst.* 4.1.7-8, we are told that the advocate achieves *auctoritas* if he appears to defend a cause disinterestedly, out of a sense of duty, or because of its importance; neutrality creates trustworthiness.

¹⁵² See Ash 2003, 223 on the historiographical tone created in Pliny's *Letters* by the inclusion of death scenes, and on the memorialization of both subject and writer effected by them.

impression is reinforced by the fact that he is writing in retirement. The young will ask advice from the retired man *uelut ex oraculo* (12.11.5: “as if from an oracle”).¹⁵³ And further:

Ac nescio an eum tum beatissimum credi oporteat fore cum iam secretus et consecratus, liber inuidia, procul contentionibus famam in tuto conlocarit et sentiet uiuus eam quae post fata praestari magis solet [et] uenerationem et quid apud posteros futurus sit uidebit. (Inst 12.11.7)

“And I do not know whether one should think that he [the orator] will be most blessed when he will – secluded and consecrated, free of envy, far away from disputes – already have safely ensured his fame, and will feel, while still alive, that veneration which is usually granted after death, and will see what he will be [mean] for future generations.”

The retired orator does not have to wait for his death to be happily detached from reality,¹⁵⁴ but reaches such a state already when he has left the forum and is, supposedly, far away from the hustle of everyday life. He is a liminal figure, standing between life and death (insofar as he is approaching the end of his life, is already ‘detached’ from it, and enjoys the authority of the dead), and this liminality makes him as impartial and authoritative as a writer of history ideally should be.¹⁵⁵ Quintilian himself may be said to be doubly liminal, and thus doubly authoritative: he is retired and thus detached from the worldly interests of forensic activity, and contributes to the education of the youth as he should do. Indeed, his authority is great, as shown by the honours others pay him, including the emperor (according to himself, of course). And since he has lost his wife and sons, he is stripped of any self-interest even in his private life (6 *pr.* 2). A few lines later, he tells us that he knows that, as far as his “mediocrity” (*mediocritate*) allowed, he researched the knowledge “candidly” (*candide*) and strove to present it “clearly” (*simpliciter*) as far as he could, adding: *Atque id uiro bono satis est, docuisse quod scierit* (12.11.8: “And this is enough for a good man, to have taught what he knew”).

In the preface to book 6, Quintilian proved himself to be a good, honourable man. At the end of the work, he makes his claim explicit: he is a *uir bonus*, or at least behaved like one (and, as we will see in §3.2.1, a man’s morals are proven by his actions). That he is also a *uir ... dicendi peritus*, he shows throughout the work. He concludes it with a final address to Marcellus Vitorius (12.11.31), stating that he hopes to have brought to “studious youths” (*studiosis iuuenibus*) – who correspond to the type of students willing to engage in the long and hard training required – if not “great use” (*magnam utilitatem*) so at least “good intentions” (*bonam uoluntatem*).¹⁵⁶ For a last time, he showcases his modesty, and highlights the primary importance of students’ willingness to engage in studies and hard

¹⁵³ Plato’s speech is described as an oracle at *Inst.* 10.1.81: ABfahl 1932, 78.

¹⁵⁴ As Solon tells Kroisos at *Hdt.* 1.32.7.

¹⁵⁵ See Peirano 2014, 254 on the liminality of the figure of the author.

¹⁵⁶ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 198 on this closing wish, and the cognate passage *Inst.* 2.12.12.

work. Not least thanks to the insights he gives into his ‘real life’, Quintilian presents himself as a good man, as well as a skilled one, and thus as a worthy educator of the ideal orator.

Conclusion

In this first chapter, I have aimed to introduce some central themes of the didactic framework of the *Institutio*, and to give a sense of its overall construction.

The beginning of the work itself is naturally a crucial place to examine in considering how an author shapes his relationship with his addressees. In my discussion of the *Letter to Trypho* (§1.1.1) and the *Preface* (§1.1.2), I focused on how Quintilian initially constructs his authorial persona and introduces the work. Some key elements of his self-presentation, as we have seen, are modesty, expertise, long teaching experience but also acquaintance with the ‘real’ world of forensic business, willingness to engage in hard work and a concern with pupils’ benefit rather than his own. He introduces his work as containing all necessary but neglecting superfluous (negligible!) information which will do the pupil no good in the forum, and as leading his addressee’s son, Geta, standing in for any pupil, through a well-structured educational programme, gradually increasing in difficulty. The ultimate didactic goal of the treatise is no less than the education of the ideal orator. We have also seen that Quintilian marks his literary ambition through his references to established literary figures, makes prominent use of expressive imagery, claims a conscious use of language for himself, and engages in polemic against other didactic writers – even if subtly enough not to undermine his pretence of modesty. As we will see in the following chapters, all these are important elements of the didactic framework of the *Institutio* throughout. Of Katharina Volk’s criteria for didactic poetry, I discussed three: “explicit didactic intent”, “teacher-pupil-constellation”, and “poetic self-consciousness” (even if in prose).

In the second half of the chapter, I took the lead from Fowler’s “didactic plot” and Volk’s fourth criterion, “poetic simultaneity”. First, I attempted to show how Quintilian fulfils his promise of a thought-through educational construct by indeed conveying a sense of gradual progress of the work, best appreciated by a linear reader and ideally proceeding simultaneously with the progress of the pupil (§1.2.1). In that connection, I have discussed the main instances in which he thematises events in his life ‘outside’ the work (§1.2.2), giving the sense that they are happening as he is writing. They reinforce the illusion of gradual progress, and contribute to his authority as a skilled, and good, man within the work.

In the next chapter, I will address the question of Quintilian’s relation to his most important model, Cicero. It will emerge that, as in the *Preface*, he balances between modest deference and the assertion of his own vision and authority regarding both Cicero’s rhetorical theory and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

2 Anxiety of Ciceronian Influence

Introduction

If Cicero's writings were lost, many fragments could be recovered from the *Institutio oratoria*.¹⁵⁷ His speeches and letters are mined throughout for rhetorical examples, and sometimes entire passages are discussed at length. Cicero, whom Quintilian calls *optimus auctor ac magister eloquentiae* (*Inst.* 5.11.7: "the best creator and teacher of eloquence"),¹⁵⁸ covers a double function: he figures both as the most important point of reference for rhetorical theory and as the most prominent stylistic model.¹⁵⁹ Quintilian is here echoing Cicero's own praise of Plato at *Or.* 10 as the *non intellegendi solum sed etiam dicendi gravissimus auctor et magister* ("most venerable creator and teacher not only of thought but also of speech").¹⁶⁰ Cicero stands as the foremost model for both rhetorical doctrine and practice from the very beginning: we have already seen how the start of the *Orator* is echoed in the *Preface* (§1.1.2). Scholarly discourse has so far (rightly) mostly examined this debt and emphasised Quintilian's admiration of Cicero.¹⁶¹ Yet just how far does Quintilian go in his admiration? Is his stance towards his model straightforwardly one based on admiration and approval?

I will now consider the reception of Cicero in the *Institutio* as a theoretical writer on rhetoric and as a practitioner, leaving the question of the influence of his conception of the ideal orator for the next chapter. Focusing mainly on programmatic passages, I will examine how Quintilian depicts, and positions himself towards, Cicero, admitting his indebtedness while also striving to assert his authority as a writer. I will start by discussing how he distances himself from Cicero on single points of rhetorical theory (§2.1.1) and how he pitches the *Institutio* against Cicero's rhetorical writings (§2.1.2). Then, I will turn to Quintilian's reception of Cicero as an orator. First, I will show how he 'canonizes' Cicero, firmly establishing his place within his educational programme and setting him on a par with Homer, Vergil and Demosthenes (§2.2.1). Then, I will consider how Cicero's style is occasionally criticised (§2.2.2) and how this prepares the ground for the explicit denial that he was the ideal orator (§2.2.3).

Overall, it will emerge how both in theory and in practice, Quintilian's reception of Cicero is more complex than has sometimes been stated. He pays homage to him as a theoretical writer, but also

¹⁵⁷ Compare Elliott 2013, 9 on the many Ennius-fragments in Macr. *Sat.* 6, and how the loss of this book would change our sense of the *Annales* in the epic tradition.

¹⁵⁸ Compare Aurelius Augustinus *De Rhet.* 1, calling Cicero *magister M. Tullius*.

¹⁵⁹ See Adamietz 1966, 10-11 on Cicero's double valence as a theoretical and practical model against which Quintilian strives to profile himself.

¹⁶⁰ Plato's eloquence is praised at Cic. *De or.* 1.47, and Cicero signals his emulation of Plato at *De or.* 1.28 through a reference to the *Phaedrus* and through the fact that the characters sit under a plantain: see Fantham 2004, 50.

¹⁶¹ See Keeline 2018, 227-28. According to La Bua 2019, 4, Quintilian sets Cicero as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* and encourages students to recreate his oratory. This chapter aims to complicate this picture, following Adamietz 1986, 2237, who rightly underlines that for Quintilian, the ideal has not been reached yet despite Cicero's achievements.

unequivocally affirms that he surpasses him in various respects. Polemic against other didactic figures and writers is a substantial element of Quintilian's self-representation starting from the *Preface* to book 1, and Cicero is not exempt from it. As a practitioner, Quintilian presents him as a model of near perfection, but also makes clear that he was not the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (*Inst.* 12.1.1). Overall, I will argue for considerable Bloomian 'anxiety of influence' on Quintilian's part.¹⁶²

2.1 Cicero the Theorist

2.1.1 Disagreeing with Cicero: On Aptness (*Inst.* 11.1) and Memory (*Inst.* 11.2)

Quintilian constantly refers to Cicero to back up his rhetorical teachings. However, he also ventures to demarcate himself from him, mostly very cautiously, but sometimes rather assertively. I will first point out a few cases of polite self-distancing on more or less minor issues, and then analyse two more substantial cases in the chapters on aptness (*Inst.* 11.1) and memory (11.2).

To give a few examples of how Quintilian at times takes a distance from Cicero: disagreeing on a point regarding *exempla*, he maintains that, really, the two positions can be seen as compatible (5.11.2).¹⁶³ Treating *finitio*, while clearly affirming a difference between his opinion and Cicero's (*Top.* 83ff.), he claims that he almost does not dare to do so:

Quamquam uix dissentire audeo a Cicerone, qui multos secutus auctores dicit finitionem esse de eodem et de altero ... tamen equidem tris habeo uelut species. (Inst. 7.3.8)

"Even if I barely dare to disagree with Cicero, who – following many authors – says that definition lies in the same and in the other ... still, I for one hold that there are three types [of definition], as it were."

The verb, *audeo*, performs and foreshadows the kind of "safer boldness" (*tutioris audentiae*) which Quintilian will later admit to when claiming to surpass Cicero regarding his conception of the ideal orator (12 *pr.* 4; see §3.1.1). In accord with his self-presentation as modest, he foregrounds how uncomfortable he apparently feels disagreeing with his model. Similarly, differing from him on the admissibility of hitting one's forehead, he writes:

Quamquam, si licet, de fronte dissentio: nam etiam complodere manus scaenicum est <et> pectus caedere. (Inst. 11.3.123)

¹⁶² See Harsting 1998, 1334-35 on the "anxiety of influence" evident from 12 *pr.*, which I will discuss below.

¹⁶³ *Inst.* 5.11.2, referring to Cic. *Inv.* 1.49; cf. Raschieri 2017, 310-11 on this and on other passages in which Quintilian refers to the *De inuentione*.

“Nevertheless, if I may, I disagree regarding the forehead: for both clapping hands and beating one’s chest is theatrical”

This is the only passage in which Quintilian softens his disagreement with *si licet*.¹⁶⁴ Though the softening itself, he draws attention to the fact that he is disagreeing with Cicero. A strong apologetic moment may be required because Quintilian, in his earlier discussion of writing practice, had made clear that clapping one’s hands (and similar gestures) is something one wants to do only in private, which is why one should avoid dictating to a secretary (10.3.21).¹⁶⁵ The theatricality he attributes to this gesture is itself damning. While he recommends that pupils should undergo some voice and posture training with an actor, he insists that the orator must not perform like an actor. The stage, traditionally the domain of slaves, has much in common with oratory, but a whiff of it in an advocate’s performance can undermine his authority.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the disagreement is rather direct: at *De or.* 3.220, Crassus warns precisely that gesture should “not be theatrical” (*gestus, non ... scaenicus*). Quintilian adopts Crassus’ warning, but in order to warn against a feature Crassus allows for. To give another example, an elaborate cautionary passage introduces his chapter on prose rhythm:

De compositione non equidem post M. Tullium scribere auderem, cui nescio an ulla pars operis huius sit magis elaborata, nisi et eiusdem aetatis homines scriptis ad ipsum etiam litteris reprehendere id conlocandi genus ausi fuissent, et post eum plures multa ad eandem rem pertinentia memoriae tradidissent. Itaque accedam in plerisque Ciceroni, atque in his ero, quae indubitata sunt, breuior, in quibusdam paulum fortasse dissentiam. Nam etiam cum iudicium meum ostendero, suum tamen legentibus relinquam. (Inst. 9.4.1-2)

“I for one would not dare to write about composition after Cicero, since I do not know if any part of his work is more elaborate, had not some people of his times dared to criticise this method of word arrangement even in letters addressed to him, and had not several authors entrusted to memory much pertinent to this subject after his lifetime. Thus, I will agree with Cicero on most points and be brief on those issues which are uncontroversial, on some others I will perhaps differ a little. For even while I will present my own judgement, I will allow readers to hold theirs.”

Again, the idea of daring comes into play, emphasised through the polyptoton *auderem-ausi*. By adducing the negative reactions of Cicero’s contemporaries and the discourse continuing after his death,

¹⁶⁴ Russell 2001, vol. 5, 148 reads *est* instead of *et* and elides *pectus caedere*.

¹⁶⁵ See Whitton 2019, 3 on the reworking of this passage at Plin. *Ep.* 1.6.2.

¹⁶⁶ As Nocchi 2013, 134 writes, Quintilian’s derogatory use of *scaenicus* signals the distance between stage and forensic activity.

Quintilian presents his own discussion as a defence of his model and as an actualization of the subject through the integration of later material.¹⁶⁷ He promises brevity on points requiring no further discussion, and politely softens the potential disagreement through the adverbs *paulum* and *fortasse*, and the juncture *in quibusdam*. The announcement that he will set his and Cicero's judgements next to each other enhances the impression of modesty.¹⁶⁸ However, it also implies that his own authority is equal to Cicero's, or even greater: for he will have the last word, and Cicero will not be able to answer. It appears that Quintilian aims to assert his independence but is careful to maintain his persona as a reasonable and modest man. I will address the question why *Inst.* 9.4 deserves such an elaborate start in §4.1.3.

An equally polite, but at a second glance firm distancing from Cicero can be found at the beginning of the chapter on *aptum* (11.1: "aptness"). Quintilian starts by saying that, once fluency has been achieved (through the imitation practice discussed in book 10: §1.2.1), the next effort is to speak aptly. He refers to Cicero, who set *aptum* as the fourth virtue of *elocutio* (*De or.* 3.37). This virtue is, Quintilian adds, extremely important: good *inuentio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio* are worthless if style is not adapted to content (*Inst.* 11.1.1-2). Earlier, he had subsumed *aptum* under *ornatus* (1.5.1), but now he draws attention to the ensuing treatment by underlining its general relevance. He supports the point through a clothing simile:

... ut monilibus et margaritis ac ueste longa, quae sunt ornamenta feminarum, deformatur uiri, nec habitus triumphalis, quo nihil excogitari potest augustius, feminas deceat. (Inst. 11.1.3)

"... just as men would be disfigured by necklaces and pearls and a long dress, which are the ornaments of women, and triumphal gear, which is more venerable than anything one could think of, would not suit women."

The mention of pearls recalls Cicero's discussion of the subtle style:

Tum removebitur omnis insignis ornatus quasi margaritarum, ne calamistri quidem adhibebuntur; fucati vero medicamenta candoris et ruboris omnia repellentur; elegantia modo et munditia remanebit. (Cic. Orat. 78-79)

¹⁶⁷ Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 733 write that this new, more systematic treatment itself shows the increased interest in this topic.

¹⁶⁸ At *Inst.* 9.4.15 e.g. he showcases his modesty by stating that while Cicero rectified harsh composition in Gracchus' writing (*Orat.* 233), he is happy to just strive for good composition himself: Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 753-74.

“Then all conspicuous ornament, pearls, as it were, will be removed, and curling tongs will not be used, either; the make-up for fake paleness and blushing will all be rejected; only elegance and tidiness will remain.”

Pearls, paradigmatic of beauty and rareness, stand for rich ornament: simple style equals simple elegance and neatness.¹⁶⁹ Quintilian adopts the metaphor of pearls for flashy style but sets it in an incongruous context to make his point: any ornament, and certainly ornament matching pearls in aesthetic extravagance, can only function as such if adapted to content.¹⁷⁰ Otherwise, it will not really adorn speech (11.1.2). We will see later that Quintilian makes extensive use of physical imagery to describe good and bad style. Good style is symbolized by a trained male physique, bad styles by bodies diverging from this ideal; and one kind of corrupt style is characterized precisely by an excess of ornament (§§3.2.3, 4.2.3). Good style is ‘masculine’, and aptness is crucial (as I will discuss, and as the linear reader of the *Institutio* already knows) because while ornament is necessary, excess jeopardizes stylistic ‘masculinity’ and poses a substantial threat to the orator’s authority. Quintilian then contrasts his approach with Cicero’s:

Hunc locum Cicero breuiter in tertio de Oratore libro perstringit, neque tamen uideri potest quicquam omisisse dicendo ‘non omni causae neque auditori neque personae neque tempori congruere orationis unum genus’: nec fere pluribus in Oratore eadem. Sed illic L Crassus, cum apud summos oratores hominesque eruditissimos dicat, satis habet partem hanc uelut notare inter agnoscentis, et hic Cicero adloquens Brutum testatur esse haec ei nota ideoque breuius a se dici, quamquam sit fusus locus tracteturque a philosophis latius. Nos institutionem professi non solum scientibus ista sed etiam discentibus tradimus, ideoque paulo pluribus uerbis debet haberi uenia. (Inst. 11.1.4-5)

“Cicero briefly summarises this topic in the third book of the *De oratore*, and yet it cannot be thought that he left anything out saying that ‘one kind of speech does not suit every case or listener or speaker or time’: and he says the same in the *Orator*, almost with as few words. But there [in the *De oratore*], Crassus since he is speaking to the greatest orators and very learned men, deems it enough to acknowledge, so to say, the subject among those who know; and Cicero here [in the *Orator*], addressing Brutus affirms that he [Brutus] already knows about these things and that he only speaks rather briefly about them because of this, even if it is a broad topic and it is treated more extensively by philosophers. I, having promised an education,

¹⁶⁹ See Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.1 or Plin. *HN* 6.81; 6.89; 6.110; 7.108; 9.105-7; 9.112: pearls are a luxury item *par excellence*. One is reminded of entreaties to elegiac mistresses to drop silks and jewellery, such as Prop. 1.2.

¹⁷⁰ See Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 960 on the triumphal vest. Russell 2002, vol. 5, 11, n. 3 suggests that Quintilian is alluding to Domitian’s triumphs.

convey this information not only to those who know, but also to those who are learning, and so a few more words must be forgiven.”

While reassuring readers that Cicero could not have put things more clearly, Quintilian insists on the brevity of both his passages on aptness (*De or.* 3.210-12 and *Orat.* 74). The statement that his own lengthiness must be forgiven has an ironical ring and recalls *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 21, where he had said that “pardon will have to be granted” (*impetranda erit uenia*) for his discussion of the basic knowledge the orator needs.¹⁷¹ This echoing of the *Preface* reminds readers that Quintilian had differentiated his work from that of other authors precisely because of its greater thoroughness regarding basic knowledge (1 *pr.* 4; see §1.1.2). Cicero’s treatment of *aptum* is signalled to be rather superficial and unhelpful for real students, despite the initial disclaimer that it is beyond reproach. Mentioning that Cicero regarded the treatment of the topic by philosophers as sufficient while announcing his own fuller treatment, Quintilian furthermore can be said to perform the sort of ‘re’-appropriation of knowledge from philosophers which he claims for the orator, as we will see in §3.1.3. What looks like a compliment turns out to be an expression of dissatisfaction.¹⁷²

There is another prominent instance where Quintilian politely but clearly signals his divergence from Cicero – this time in his treatment of *memoria* (*Inst.* 11.2). Quintilian recounts a famous anecdote about the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos, credited with the invention of mnemotechnic (11.2.11-16).¹⁷³ He follows Cic. *De or.* 2.352-53, where Antonius’ character also begins his discussion of the topic with this anecdote (2.350-60).¹⁷⁴ Antonius reports that people “say” (*dicunt*) that, when Simonides dined in Crannon in Thessaly at the house of Scopas, a successful and noble man, and had sung the song which he had composed about him, “in which there was, after the manner of the poets, much about Castor and Pollux for the sake of ornament” (*in quo multa ornandi causa poetarum more in Castorem scripta et Pollucem fuissent*), he (Scopas) told Simonides, very disgracefully, that he would pay him half the established price for that song; the rest he should ask from his Tyndarids, whom he had praised equally, if he wished (2.352). People “tell” (*ferunt*) that shortly after, Simonides was asked to come out; that “two youths” (*iuvenis ... duo quosdam*) stood at the door who insistently called for him; that he got up, went outside, saw nobody: that in the meantime, the hall in which Scopas was dining broke down; that squashed by this collapse, he died together with his relatives: that, when kinsmen wanted to bury them and could not tell apart the crushed bodies, Simonides “is said” (*dicitur*) to have identified each of them

¹⁷¹ Quintilian here underlines his role as an educator, as Schneider 1983, 122 writes.

¹⁷² See also Cic. *Orat.* 43-44, where Cicero underlines the importance of speaking aptly, but states that he will give no teachings (*Nulla praecepta ponemus*). Quintilian himself proceeds via examples more than via precepts.

¹⁷³ Simonides was also regarded as the inventor of part of the Greek alphabet (Tac. *Ann.* 11.14.2), which shows the proximity of the issues of preservation of memory and of writing: Möller 2013, 298.

¹⁷⁴ Earlier, Antonius tells another anecdote involving Simonides: he offers his mnemotechnic to Themistocles, who refuses it because he would prefer an art of forgetting, a self-aware quip matching the reversal of fortune he experienced (*De or.* 2.299; also recounted at *Fin.* 2.104-5). Weinrich 1997, 23-25 regards this as the first hint at an art of forgetting. At *Orat.* 54, Cicero deploys a *praeteritio* instead of discussing *memoria*.

for the burial because he remembered where each of them had been reclining; it is held that, inspired by this event, he found out that it is foremost (spatial) order which brings light to memory (2.353).

Throughout the passage, Antonius signals that he is merely telling a reported story.¹⁷⁵ Quintilian highlights the uncertainties of the tradition even more strongly:

Artem autem memoriae primus ostendisse dicitur Simonides, cuius uulgata fabula est: cum pugili coronato carmen, quale componi uictoribus solet, mercede pacta scripsisset, abnegatam ei pecuniae partem quod more poetis frequentissimo degressus in laudes Castoris ac Pollucis exierat: quapropter partem ab iis petere quorum facta celebrasset iuebatur. Et persoluerunt, ut traditum est: nam cum esset grande conuiuium in honorem eiusdem uictoriae atque adhibitus ei cenae Simonides, nuntio est excitus, quod eum duo iuuenes equis aduecti desiderare maiorem in modum dicebantur. Et illos quidem non inuenit, fuisse tamen gratos erga se deos exitu comperit. Nam uix eo ultra limen egresso triclinium illud supra conuiuias corruit, atque ita confudit ut non ora modo oppressorum sed membra etiam omnia requirentes ad sepulturam propinqui nulla nota possent discernere. (Inst. 11.2.11-13)

“But Simonides is said to have first displayed an art of memory, about whom the tale is well-known: after he had written for a crowned boxer a song of the kind that is written for winners, a price having been stipulated, part of the money was denied to him because he had, in a manner most common to poets, digressed into praises of Castor and Pollux; on which account he was ordered to ask part of the reward from them, whose deeds he had celebrated. And they settled their debt, as it is reported: for when there was a great banquet in honour of that same victory and Simonides was invited to that dinner, he was called outside by a messenger, because two youths on horseback were said to call for him urgently. And, in fact, he did not find them, but from the outcome he understood that the gods were grateful to him. For he had barely stepped over the threshold when the hall collapsed onto the banqueters and mingled them in such a way that the relatives, who were searching them for burial, could not discern, by any sign, not only the faces of the crushed men, but also the limbs.”

Quintilian introduces the story as a *fabula* and specifies neither Simonides’ provenance nor the poem’s recipient right away. He transforms Cicero’s *poetarum more* into *more poetis frequentissimo*, enhancing the generalising quality already contained in *more* through the superlative adjective, and describes the poem itself as an expression of a wider practice to honour winners. He also makes the links between

¹⁷⁵ As May and Wisse 2001, 37 remark, Antonius does not provide an extensive account of Simonides’ technique, expecting readers to know it. Farrell 1997, 380-81 highlights that Antonius stresses that he is merely reproducing a story and argues that he presents less a technical discussion than an encomium of Simonides, who bears similarities to Cicero as a man expecting his activities to bear some fruit but being cheated of his reward.

the single events more explicit and extends the timeline. Simonides is cheated of half the money before attending a banquet in honour of the winner, which becomes the occasion for the Dioscuri to prove their favour. Two youths on horseback, more easily recognizable than Cicero's two youths, are announced to the poet, who steps outside to meet them. While Antonius presents the dénouement of the episode in a paratactic sequence of short sentences (3.353), Quintilian takes up the subjective point of view of Simonides, who interprets the hall's collapse as a sign of the gods' gratitude. Then comes the turning point, Simonides' invention of mnemotechnic following this event:

Tum Simonides dicitur memor ordinis quo quisque discubuerat corpora suis reddidisse. Est autem magna inter auctores dissensio Glaucōne Carystio an Leocrati an Agatharcho an Scopae scriptum sit id carmen, et Pharsali fuerit haec domus, ut ipse quodam loco significare Simonides uidetur utque Apollodorus et Eratosthenes et Euphorion et Larissaeus Eurypylus tradiderunt, an Crannone, ut Apollas †Calimachus†, quem secutus Cicero hanc famam latius fudit. Scopam nobilem Thessalum perisse in eo conuiuio constat, adicitur sororis eius filius, putant et ortos plerosque ab alio Scopas qui maior aetate fuerit. Quamquam mihi totum de Tyndaridis fabulosum uidetur, neque omnino huius rei meminit umquam poeta ipse, profecto non taciturus de tanta sua gloria. (Inst. 11.2.13-16)

“Then, Simonides is said to have given back the bodies to the relatives, remembering the position in which each person had been lying. There is, however, great disagreement between authors whether that song was written for Glaucōn of Carystus or Leocrates or Agatharchus or Scopas, and whether that house was in Pharsalus, as Simonides himself seems to convey at one point and as Apollodorus and Eratosthenes and Euphorion and Eurypylus of Larissa reported, or in Crannon, as did Apollas †Calimachus†; Cicero, following the latter, diffused that report more widely. It is certain that the noble Thessalian Scopas died during that banquet, the son of his sister is added, and, they think, also most sons of an other, older, Scopas. However, all this thing about the Tyndarids seems like a tale to me, and the poet himself, who certainly would not have been silent about such a great feat of his, never mentions this affair.”

The information that Simonides was able to identify the corpses through his mnemotechnic is presented in indirect speech, allowing for doubts about its veracity. Most notably, Quintilian adds an element absent from the *De oratore* by problematizing the dissension among writers on the identity of the athlete and the place. Presenting a list, Quintilian proves his own mnemonic ability. More importantly, he points to discrepancies in the tradition and its arbitrary workings: one version of the story is more

widespread simply because it was chosen by Cicero.¹⁷⁶ Quintilian shows himself to be more methodical and accurate than his model, who himself contributes to the randomness of this reception history. He concludes on a personal note, remarking that he could not leave out this anecdote because it is so well-known, as often signalling his engagement with his readership's expectations. Quintilian shows himself to operate like a historian, gathering the evidence and giving a dispassionate evaluation of a doubtful tradition. He displays an ability he requires for the orator and complies with his friends' (alleged) wish that he should pass judgment on earlier material (see §§1.1.2; 3.2.2).¹⁷⁷

Then, he summarises the elements of this Simonidean mnemotechnic, accepting its core tenet that spatial imagination helps memory. People concluded from this story that memory is helped by places written into one's mind; "this, anyone knows from his own experience" (*idque credit suo quisque experimento*). For when we go back to the same places after a while, we recognize them and even remember what happened when we were there. "As in most things, art was born from experience" (*Nata est igitur, ut in plerisque, ars ab experimento*: 11.2.17). Here as elsewhere, Quintilian draws on the wider structures of rhetorical theory to describe a subject less firmly established within it.¹⁷⁸ He then distances himself from this technique by switching to the third person to describe in more detail the procedure of those using it (11.2.18-20).¹⁷⁹ This section ends with a remark on Metrodorus of Scepsis. Antonius in the *De oratore* mentions him and Charmadas as men of prodigious memory who both likened the placing of images into *loci* to writing letters on wax.¹⁸⁰ Quintilian reports that Metrodorus set up 360 different *loci*:

Quo magis miror quo modo Metrodorus in XII signis per quae sol meat trecenos et sexagenos inuenerit locos. Vanitas nimirum fuit atque iactatio circa memoriam suam potius arte quam natura gloriantis. (Inst. 11.2.22)

"All the more, I wonder how Metrodorus found 360 loci in the 12 spheres [of the zodiac] through which the sun wanders. This was clearly vanity and a showing off of his memory, as someone boasting more about his art than his talent."

¹⁷⁶ Compare Sen. *Ep.* 21.4, where Seneca reflects on the power of famous authors to pass on knowledge which would otherwise be lost. See Hömke 2002, 22 or Howley 2017, 225 on Seneca the Elder's self-assigned mission to preserve the memory of past declaimers.

¹⁷⁷ Russell 2002, vol. 5, 64, n. 8 comments: "Quintilian here gives an unusual display of grammatical learning".

¹⁷⁸ Compare *Inst.* 1.10.25; 6.2.25; 4.2.86; 11.2.33; 11.2.42; Quintilian also regularly stresses the importance of experience, e.g. at 2.5.15; 12.2.7.

¹⁷⁹ They build mental images of physical spaces, create memorable images their thoughts, and set them into the spaces. The symbols are called *imagines*, the mental spaces *loci*, following terminology already used at *Rhet. Her.* 3.30. Quintilian cites Cicero *verbatim* on the required qualities of the *loci* (*Inst.* 11.2.22, *De or.* 2.358). Some modern mnemonists still employ Simonides' technique: see Foer 2011, 8-10; 17-18.

¹⁸⁰ *De or.* 2.360. At *Tusc.* 1.59, Metrodorus and Charmadas are mentioned together with Simonides and others as men of prodigious memory. Plin. *HN* 7.89 writes that Metrodorus perfected this art, invented by Simonides. Webb 2009, 112 notes that Quintilian's remark at *Inst.* 11.2.4 that the analogy between wax and memory is made by many people shows how widespread this Aristotelian image was.

Quintilian dismisses Metrodorus' endeavour as vain and as empty display, as is clear from the words *uanitas* and *iactatio*.¹⁸¹ Then, he starts pointing out the weaknesses of the Simonidean technique, markedly starting with *Equidem*. He admits that it can be helpful sometimes, for instance to reproduce lists of words (11.2.23),¹⁸² but denies its usefulness for memorizing continuous speech, since images cannot signify all words, and remembering both entails a double mnemonic effort (11.2.24-26).¹⁸³ Disparaging Metrodorus, someone whom Antonius' character adduces as a main representative of this mnemotechnic, Quintilian distances himself from his model Cicero without criticising him directly. That Antonius in this passage stands as Cicero's spokesperson and not as a separate authority appears from the following sentence:

Qua re et Charmadas et Scepsius de quo dixi Metrodorus, quos Cicero dicit usos hac exercitatione, sibi habeant sua: nos simpliciora tradamus. (Inst. 11.2.26)

“Because of this, let both Charmadas and, about whom I have spoken, Metrodorus of Scepsis, whom Cicero reports to have used this exercise, keep it for themselves: I shall teach easier things.”

Cicero, rather than Antonius, appears as the source of information on Charmadas and Metrodorus. This leaves little doubt that he is the object of criticism.¹⁸⁴ Announcing a new, less complex, treatment of the matter which will yield better results for practitioners, Quintilian showcases straightforward simplicity as a selling-point for his own technique as opposed to a hyper-complex literary tradition, just as he did in the *Preface* (§1.1.2). Furthermore, he presents himself as innovative: while Cicero (through Antonius) simply follows the tradition both in his account of the anecdote about Simonides and the admiration he professes for the two Greek mnemonists, he developed a new approach for the sake of his students, which he goes on to present (11.2.27-51). His main suggestions are the subdivision of a long speech into manageable sections (11.2.27) and the mental visualisation of the written words on the tablet (11.2.32), which he recommends as similar to, but more powerful than, the Simonidean

¹⁸¹ Quintilian repeatedly attributes vanity (*uanitas*) or the wish to show off (*iactatio*) to people he wants to undermine (e.g. *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 4; 1.5.11; 2.4.16; 4.3.2).

¹⁸² Seneca the Elder claims that his memory was prodigious in his youth (*Controv.* 1 *pr.* 2) and remarks that memory is helped by art (*Controv.* 1 *pr.* 17). Fairweather 1981, 38; 42; 228-29 suggests that we should not be over-sceptical about his mnemonic abilities. Compare Immisch 1929, 114 and Möller 2013, 279 on Cicero's claim at the start of the *Topica* that he is writing from memory. See further Baroin 2007, 139 on Socrates in Pl. *Hp. mi.* 368d attributing Hippias' ability to list fifty names to mnemonics.

¹⁸³ See Blum 1969, 129 and Carruthers 2008, 92-93; 135 on Quintilian's scepticism towards the image-making schemes, and his alternative advice about subdividing the text, embedding cues, and visualising it like a tablet.

¹⁸⁴ Like Cicero, Quintilian takes a more positive stance than Plato on writing in connection with memory. Gowing 2000, 45; 50 argues that Cicero's insistence at *Brut.* 91-92 on the importance of writing for training and for leaving behind a memory of one's oratory betrays an anxiety about a political situation perceived as ending free speech. For Loth 1898, 22, Quintilian shares Plato's scepticism towards writing.

visualisation of *signa*: *si quid me experimenta docuerunt* (11.2.33: “if experience taught me anything”). Repetition (11.2.35) is another important ingredient. He reiterates the experienced-based character of his approach a few paragraphs later:

Quod meae quoque memoriae mediocritatem sequebatur, si quando interuentus aliquorum qui hunc honorem mererentur iterare declamationis partem coegisset. Nec est mendacio locus, saluis qui interfuerunt. Si quis tamen unam maximamque a me artem memoriae quaerat, exercitatio est et labor. (Inst. 11.2.39-40)

“This even worked with the mediocrity of my memory, if ever the [late] arrival of some who deserved that honour had forced me to repeat a part of a declamation. And there is no room for lies, since some of those who were present are still alive. If anyone, however, should ask from me the one and the greatest art of memory, it is training and hard work.”

Claiming that his talent was only mediocre in this respect does not take away from his authority, but rather confirms the efficacy of his programme.¹⁸⁵ The addition that it would make no sense to lie since there are witnesses is a nice example of a reference to the reality ‘outside’ the work which serves to support the authority of the didactic persona created within it.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, he conjures up an image of himself in a real-life dialogic, didactic setting. He thereby gives the impression of a widespread interest in his performance, showcases his willingness to engage in an open dialogue, and reminds readers of his long real-life experience as a teacher. We have already seen how within the work, he achieves a similar effect by sometimes falling into a dialogical ductus. The notion that hard work is the key to success is also characteristic of the *Institutio*: it is first introduced at 1 *pr.* 26 and reiterated throughout.¹⁸⁷ Students following Quintilian’s system will have to work hard but will achieve more solid results than those promised (in this case) by mnemonic tricksters. This could be said to recall one prominent didactic precedent, Vergil’s *Georgics*.¹⁸⁸

Laying out such an alternative method, Quintilian contributes to his didactic persona as a thorough and demanding teacher, which he also advertises in his chapter on *aptum*. Why does he choose these two chapters to distinguish himself from Cicero? Perhaps because both treat topics which are relatively novel and accordingly undertheorized in rhetorical theory (as opposed e.g. to *argumentatio* or tropes), and which therefore leave more room for innovation and authorial self-representation than others – an opportunity that Quintilian seizes.

¹⁸⁵ Pliny at *HN pr.* 12 similarly claims that his talent is *mediocre*.

¹⁸⁶ Compare Cicero’s remark at *De or.* 2.9 that his public will still know the oratory of Crassus and Antonius, and that he leaves little room for fiction.

¹⁸⁷ See e.g. *Inst.* 2.13.15; 7.1.40 on the importance attributed to “hard work” (*labor*) and “training” (*exercitatio*).

¹⁸⁸ Verg. *G.* 1.145: *labor omnia uicit*.

2.1.2 Pitching the *Institutio* against Cicero's Rhetorical Writings

In the last section, we have seen how Quintilian distances himself from Cicero in his discussion of single topics based on his *modus operandi* which is advertised as more methodical and 'didactic' in the sense that it will concretely benefit students. The same can be said about how he sets the *Institutio* against Cicero's entire rhetorical corpus.

In his review of extant rhetorical writings in book three, we read:

Praecipuum uero lumen sicut eloquentiae, ita praeceptis quoque eius dedit unicum apud nos specimen orandi docendique oratorias artes M. Tullius, post quem tacere modestissimum foret, nisi et rhetoricos suos ipse adulescenti sibi elapsos diceret, et in oratoriis haec minora, quae plerumque desiderantur, sciens omisisset. (Inst. 3.1.20)

"Indeed Cicero, the outstanding model for speaking and for teaching the rhetorical arts in our community, just as he shed particular light on eloquence, so also did he do on its instruction; after him, it would have been most modest to keep silent, unless he had not said himself that his rhetorical works slipped out from himself when he was a youth, and had he not, in his works on oratory, knowingly left out those lesser things, which are generally required."

Quintilian starts with a compliment to Cicero's rhetorical practice and his theory. The only reason why it is still possible to write about rhetoric is that he only treated basic rhetorical knowledge in a youthful work – the *De inuentione*, dismissed at *De or.* 1.5.¹⁸⁹ He differentiates between Cicero's works on oratory and rhetoric, meaning advanced and basic teaching. This corresponds to his advertising of his treatment of single topics as more student-friendly, discussed in the last section. The clarification that Cicero did so knowingly is polite insofar as it eliminates any implication that Cicero was not aware of what he was doing. It also likely points to the explicit announcement at *De or.* 1.23 (reiterated at *De or.* 3.48) that basic information will be left out. This supports my suggestion at §1.1.2 that the use of *ab incunabilis* at *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 6 alludes to *De or.* 1.23, and retrospectively clarifies that Cicero was included in the less circumspect, if anonymous, criticism of earlier writers leaving out basic teaching (1 *pr.* 3-4). In other words, Cicero's rhetorical writings are outstanding, but give scope for improvement, foremost

¹⁸⁹ The same sort of rejection is made of Antonius' early *libellus* on rhetoric at *De or.* 1.94; 1.206; 2.8; 3.189, *Orat.* 18; 33. Quintilian here takes Cicero at his word for his statement, even if, as Steel 2001, 165 writes, it should be read foremost as a reminder that Cicero had started writing on rhetoric at a young age. Cicero advertises the early start of his forensic career e.g. at *Div. Caec.* 4, *Orat.* 107. The argument in Raschieri 2017, 310 that Quintilian's point is that the mistake in the *De inuentione* is due to Cicero's teacher, not Cicero himself, seems less attractive, since he elsewhere distances himself from Cicero in similarly oblique ways, as seen in §2.1.1.

because they omit knowledge which is necessary in a work that is properly didactic insofar as it purports to teach students who are yet inexperienced.¹⁹⁰

Also in other passages, Quintilian points to inconsistencies between Cicero's rhetorical writings, true to his mission of evaluating earlier works (1 *pr.* 1). At *Inst.* 3.5.12-15, he refers to the authority of Hermagoras to assert the importance for the orator of treating general questions (*theseis*) and notes that Cicero disagreed with this approach. Then, however, he says that there are two things freeing him "from the embarrassment of contradicting" Cicero (*respondendi uerecundia*): firstly, "that he criticises these earlier books [*De inuentione*] himself" (*quod ipse hos libros improbat*). Secondly, that he maintains the relevance of general questions in the *Orator*, the *De oratore*, and the *Topica* (3.5.15).¹⁹¹ This corresponds to an earlier comparative evaluation of Cicero's works based on their chronology: *in quibus postea scriptis certior eius sententia est* (3.3.7: "in those [works] written later, his opinion is more certain").¹⁹² Here as elsewhere, Quintilian makes a show of disagreeing with Cicero reluctantly, and of really agreeing with his 'definitive' stance.

He later again refers to Cicero's dismissal of the *De inuentione*, self-referentially pointing back to his earlier remark: *Sed quod ipsius de his libris iudicium fuerit supra dixi* (3.6.59: "But what his own judgement about these books was, I have said above"). Then, he reinforces the point by underlining the excellence of the *De oratore* compared to the earlier work (3.6.60). Reiterating his judgement, Quintilian showcases his own consistency just as he signals Cicero's inconsistency. Shortly after, he informs his audience about a change of opinion he himself went through regarding the *status legalis*:

*Ipse me paulum in alia quam prius habuerim opinione nunc esse confiteor. Et fortasse tutissimum erat famae modo studenti nihil ex eo mutare quod multis annis non sensissem modo uerum etiam adprobassem. Sed non sustineo esse conscius mihi dissimulanti, in eo praesertim opere quod ad bonorum iuuenum aliquam utilitatem componimus, in ulla parte iudicii mei. Nam et Hippocrates clarus arte medicinae uidetur honestissime fecisse quod quosdam errores suos, ne posteri errarent, confessus est, et M. Tullius non dubitauit aliquos iam editos libros aliis postea scriptis ipse damnare, sicut Catulum atque Lucillum et hos ipsos de quibus modo sum locutus, artis rhetoricae. Etenim superuacuum foret in studiis longior labor si nihil liceret melius inuenire praeteritis. (*Inst.* 3.6.63-65)*

¹⁹⁰ I am focusing on programmatic statements, but Quintilian does of course not always declare when he differs from Cicero. See e.g. Citroni 2006, 13 on how Quintilian ignores the canon of authors set up at Cic. *Fin.* 1.7 and *Opt. gen.* 6. A chapter of the *Institutio* which has been discussed in depth regarding the extent to which it depends on Cicero is the one on laughter (*Inst.* 6.3 vs. *De or.* 2.216-90), starting from Arndt 1904 and Sehlmeier 1912.

¹⁹¹ The passages referred to are Cic. *Orat.* 45 and *De or.* 2.133 and probably *Top.* 86: Adamietz 1966, 107.

¹⁹² See on how Quintilian gives precedence to Cicero's later works and strives to assert his independence Bolaffi 1958, 23. For Adamietz 1966, 89, by agreeing with Cicero's later works after criticising the *De inuentione* Quintilian eliminates any polemical edge ("alle Schärfe").

“I admit that I myself have a slightly different opinion now than the one I used to hold. And perhaps it would have been safest for someone only striving for renown not to change anything of that which for many years I did not only think, but openly approved of. But I cannot tolerate to be knowingly deceitful – especially in this work, which I write to some benefit of good youths – regarding any part of my judgement. For both Hippocrates, famous in the art of medicine, appears to have done very worthily to admit some errors of his so that future generations would not err, and also Cicero did not hesitate to condemn himself some of his already published books in those he wrote later, like the *Catulus* and the *Lucullus* and those same books, which I have just spoken about, on the art of rhetoric. And indeed, any longer effort spent on one’s studies would be useless if it were not allowed to develop opinions better than earlier ones.”

Quintilian presents himself as transparent regarding his intellectual development.¹⁹³ Showcasing this self-correction, he proves the difference between himself and other didactic figures just interested in showing off (see §§1.1.2, 3.1.3, 4.1.1-3). Furthermore, Hippocrates’ mention makes such self-correction appear as essential, since perpetuating the mistake could provoke a patient’s death;¹⁹⁴ he and Cicero grant a precedent for Quintilian’s honesty.¹⁹⁵ Finally, the comment that any prolonged study would be useless if changing one’s opinions was inadmissible draws the reader’s attention to the circumstance that the *Institutio* is not a freshman’s work, but the product of a whole life’s study. It presents the results of a long, but never fossilized, engagement with the subject, which thus has all credentials to reach the status of an ultimately valid account of rhetorical theory.

But does Quintilian’s Hippocratic-Ciceronian self-fashioning in admitting his mistake not expose him to the same criticism of incoherence he previously levelled against Cicero? No, for there is a key difference in the way in which he presents changes in his own and in Cicero’s thought. Cicero’s inconsistencies are between the published works he wrote at various points in his career. Quintilian instead is presenting the *Institutio* as his one, final, position. Even if he previously held another opinion and expressed it during his teaching activity, he did not entrust it to writing. If it circulated in written form, then it did so merely in a pirated version (1 *pr.* 7; see §1.1.2). Unlike Cicero, he waited before publishing and does not leave room for uncertainty, or interpretation and evaluation on the part of readers.¹⁹⁶ He will not add to the ‘confusion’ created by the great amount of contradictory rhetorical works (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 1). Instead, he will present the ultimate, well-balanced, authoritative synthesis of all rhetorical theory.

¹⁹³ As Ahlheid 1983, 34 writes, Quintilian here shows himself as concerned with his readers’ interest, rather than with his reputation.

¹⁹⁴ Adamietz 1966, 141 refers to Hippoc. *Epid.* 5.27 and Celsus, *Med.* 8.4.3 (p. 378, 3 Marx) and wonders whether Quintilian may be taking the information from the latter. Regarding Quintilian’s remark on Cicero’s change of mind he points to *Inst.* 9.3.90, on which see Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 708.

¹⁹⁵ Compare Cic. *Orat.* 176 on Isocrates modifying his style in old age.

¹⁹⁶ Unlike Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.1.1), Quintilian presents the deferred start of his writing not as due to political considerations, but as a sign of intellectual maturity.

Quintilian continuously refers to Cicero, and at times cites his works extensively. The extensiveness of some of these citations may, somewhat paradoxically, support the impression that the *Institutio* is advertised as a definitive, monolithic, coherent, and thus more useful work for the student of rhetoric than Cicero's beautiful but contradictory writings.¹⁹⁷ A notable example is *Inst.* 9.1: Quintilian announces that he will cite Cicero at length "so that I may not deprive readers of the judgement of the greatest author" (9.1.25: *ne fraudarem legentes iudicio maximi auctoris*).¹⁹⁸ Little less than half the chapter consists of extensive citations of Cicero. While this constitutes an homage, it also, to some extent, makes Cicero's texts obsolete. Quintilian may be said to encourage readers to trust his own report instead of reading them directly, thus proposing himself as a mediator. It is precisely the flattering extensiveness of the quotations which potentially makes the citation act 'violent': fragments of Cicero within the new, all-encompassing work, commented on, evaluated, and made more easily accessible than the extensive and self-contradictory original corpus, relieve the reader from the task of grappling with it themselves.¹⁹⁹

2.2 Cicero the Orator

2.2.1 'Canonizing' Cicero

Quintilian posits Cicero as his most important model for his rhetorical theory, but also strives to assert his own independence as a writer. He does so by claiming a more thorough, consistent, and thus 'didactic' method for himself, both regarding the treatment of single topics and the *Institutio* generally. In the following, I will argue for a similar tension between praise and polite criticism in his reception of Cicero as an orator. In this section, I will show how Quintilian cites him extensively and 'canonizes' him by attributing a central place to him in his didactic programme as a model for *imitatio*. Then, I will show how he at times criticises features of his style, hinting at moral shortcomings (§2.2.2). Finally, I will discuss how Cicero emerges as the best orator who ever lived, but not as the ideal orator (§2.2.3). This delicate balance is crucial for Quintilian's project: on the one hand, he supports much of his teaching by referring to Cicero's oratory and is, accordingly, careful to promote it. On the other, there would be no scope for the education of the ideal orator, had he already existed.

What place does Cicero take in Quintilian's advice on *imitatio*? His presence can already be detected at the very start of the overview of authors:

¹⁹⁷ This strategy recalls the appropriation, and declared surpassing, of Thucydides at Livy 21.1.1: see on this Kraus 2013, 423. Compare McGill 2020, 55 on how Pliny the Elder presents his work as a comprehensive, definitive study, and claims respect for his "extraordinarily rigorous research". See also Nichols 2020, 8 on Vitruvius' main claim to fame lying in the organisation of diverse material into a well-arranged whole.

¹⁹⁸ Quintilian quotes Cic. *De or.* 3.201-8 at *Inst.* 9.1.25-36, and *Orat.* 134-39 at *Inst.* 9.1.37-45. Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 224-25 remark that these citations are honorific, if not entirely uncritical, and suggest that Quintilian is presenting them because they were often used in schools.

¹⁹⁹ Simon Goldhill introduced the notion of 'violent' citation practice during a session of the "Ethical Reading" seminar series on the "Fragment" organised by Constanze Güthenke and Hindy Najman in HT 2021.

Igitur, ut Aratus ab Ioue incipiendum putat, ita nos rite coepturi ab Homero uidemur. (Inst. 10.1.46)

“Therefore, just as Aratus thinks that he must start from Jupiter, so we will seem to start duly from Homer.”

This announces the overview to be, if not complete, then at least wide-ranging and methodical.²⁰⁰ Quintilian aptly inserts a reference to the start of Aratus’ *Phaenomena* just before embarking on his evaluation of Greek authors.²⁰¹ The Hellenistic poet, later judged rather harshly, is not the only intertext here (10.1.55).²⁰² Closer in the background stands Cicero’s *De re publica*, where Scipio introduces his opinion on different forms of the state thus:

‘Imitabor ergo Aratum, qui magnis de rebus dicere exordiens a Ioue incipiendum putat.’ (Cic. Rep. 1.56)

“I will therefore imitate Aratus, who, starting to speak about great things, thinks that he must start from Jupiter.”

The identical juncture used for Aratus’ decision shows that Quintilian mentions Aratus, but really is referring to Cicero, a ‘window’ citation displaying his own learnedness and critical authority. Scipio’s self-referential *imitabor* makes the *De re publica* passage a particularly fitting reference point for Quintilian’s introduction of his ‘best of’ selection for the student’s imitation practice.

More importantly, Cicero is attributed the same place in Latin prose as Vergil in poetry. As seen above (§1.2.1), children should start reading poetry with the *grammaticus* from Homer and Vergil. For Greek and Latin prose, Demosthenes and Cicero are paired as the authors who are best, and who should dominate early training. Criticising contemporary school practice for focusing too exclusively on declamation, Quintilian asks:

An uero declamabit quidem praeceptor ut sit exemplo suis auditoribus: non plus contulerint lecti Cicero aut Demosthenes? (Inst. 2.5.6)

²⁰⁰ See Habinek 2017, 291 on the idea that prose derives from poetry and Peirano Garrison 2019, 107 on how Quintilian’s opening the overview from Homer implies this notion.

²⁰¹ Aratus, *Phaen.* 1: Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχόμεσθα ...: Peterson 1891, 19. See Cicero’s citation of the start of his own literary translation of Aratus at Cic. *Leg.* 2.7: *A Ioue Musarum primordia*.

²⁰² Quintilian judges Aratus’ material as too dry (*Inst.* 10.1.55: *Arati materia motu caret*), among other reasons because it does not include any speech. At *Inst.* 3.1.3, he expresses concern about the potential dryness of his own treatise.

“Or indeed, some teacher will declaim in order to be a model to his listeners; will it not be more useful to have read Cicero or Demosthenes?”

Reading Cicero and Demosthenes will be more useful for pupils, it is implied, than hearing some mediocre teacher declaiming. Within Latin prose, Livy is added as the best historian to start with, because of his clarity (2.5.19). But it is Cicero who takes the place of honour:

Cicero, ut mihi quidem uidetur, et iucundus incipientibus quoque et apertus est satis, nec prodesse tantum sed etiam amari potest; tum quem ad modum Liuius praecipit, ut quisque erit Ciceroni simillimus. (Inst. 2.5.20)

“Cicero, as it seems to me at least, is both pleasant and clear enough for beginners, and he can not only be useful but also be enjoyed; and then, as Livy teaches, should come whoever is most like Cicero.”

Authors should be chosen progressively according to their degree of similarity to Cicero, who thus covers the same ‘canonical’ function in Latin prose as Vergil in poetry: he should serve as the normative standard against whom others will be measured. Quintilian refers to Livy for this idea, who is a particularly fitting authority, being himself recommended for early reading. It is reiterated in book 10 just before the overview of authors:

Fuit igitur breuitas illa tutissima quae <est> apud Liuium in epistula ad filium scripta, legendos Demosthenen atque Ciceronem, tum ita ut quisque esset Demostheni et Ciceroni simillimus. (Inst. 10.1.39)

“The safest thing would have been the brevity of Livy in the letter written to his son, that Demosthenes and Cicero should be read, and then whoever is most like Demosthenes and Cicero.”

The repetition of this evaluation confirms its importance.²⁰³ It is slightly expanded in the second instance through the addition of Demosthenes and the specification that Livy stated this in a letter to his son, a suitably didactic context. After suggesting this two-man selection, Quintilian contrasts his brevity with the length at which Cicero discussed Roman oratory in the *Brutus*, but then opts for a

²⁰³ Compare Aquila Romanus, *Fig. sent.* 48: *Plurimum optimorum, Demosthenis praesertim et M. Tulli iuvabit lectio.* Demosthenes is the only Greek author Aquila cites: see Leff 1973, 275. See on the notion of a hyper-restricted canon (Demosthenes-Cicero) Citroni 2005, 23-24.

broader approach.²⁰⁴ Any author can be useful “to those employing judgement” (10.1.41: *iudicium adhibentibus*): good readers can select the best elements of any writer because they were exposed only to the best models in the early stages of training, and internalised what good literature should be like (see §1.1.2). Within the overview, Cicero is presented as the best Latin author of all times:

Oratores uero uel praecipue Latinam eloquentiam parem facere Graecae possunt: nam Ciceronem cuicumque eorum fortiter opposuerim. Nec ignoro quantam mihi concitem pugnam, cum praesertim non id sit propositi, ut eum Demostheni comparem hoc tempore: neque enim attinet, cum Demosthenen in primis legendum uel ediscendum potius putem. (Inst. 10.1.105)

“But it is chiefly the orators who can make Latin literature equal to Greek: for I would bravely pit Cicero against any of them. Nor am I unaware how great a fight I stir up for myself, even if it is not my scope at this time to compare him to Demosthenes; nor is it relevant, since I think that Demosthenes first of all should be read, or rather learnt by heart.”

Cicero opens the section on Latin oratory and is set at the pinnacle of Latin literature.²⁰⁵ The question arises how we should interpret Quintilian’s claim to controversy.²⁰⁶ After all, pairing Demosthenes and Cicero is not that unusual, nor is the latter’s status as the (or a) most outstanding orator. Even the claim that he surpassed Demosthenes does not seem too outrageous.²⁰⁷ Perhaps Quintilian’s remark is simply a means of arousing interest in his discussion of Cicero. The fight metaphor may support this reading: his willingness to pitch Cicero against any Greek faintly recalls a “trainer” (*lanista*) setting two gladiators against each other. This is in tune with the employment of agonistic vocabulary throughout *Inst.* 10.1.46-131 to compare authors.²⁰⁸ Similarly, Seneca the Elder had wryly likened the literary

²⁰⁴ See Raschieri 2019, 478 on the acknowledged selectivity of Quintilian’s list of authors vs. the more exhaustive character of the *Brutus*. Schwindt 2000, 157-58 argues that this selectivity characterizes the overview as literary history, Nauta 2007, 3-6 instead speaks of a canon and points out that all (named) authors praised belong to the Late Republican or Augustan period. See Citroni 2003, 11 on Quintilian’s reference to Hellenistic library catalogues at 10.1.57 and his denial that he is composing such a catalogue at 10.1.104: he aims for selectivity, not completeness. Citroni 2006, 4-5 argues that Quintilian’s remark that Aemilius Macer and Lucretius are useless as models for the orator shows that some authors are included because of their prestige, and remarks that his knowledge of Dionysius of Halicarnassus is shown by the fact that he chooses the same Greek lyric poets, and that he similarly starts his discussion of Greek poets with Homer and ends it with Euripides and Menander. See on this also Fuhrmann 1973, 171 and Russell 1979, 6.

²⁰⁵ Quintilian adopts the remark of Brutus’ character at *Cic. Brut.* 254-55 that Cicero brought Latin eloquence to the level of Greek: see Döpp 1985, 12. See Raschieri 2017, 341 on how Quintilian, attributing primacy to Demosthenes, differs from Dio of Prusa, who recommends Hyperides and Aeschines as equally good, but easier.

²⁰⁶ In Martial e.g. Cicero appears repeatedly as the exemplar of the successful orator (cf. *Mart.* 3.38.3; 5.56.5; 7.63.5-6; at 11.48.1-4 Vergil and Cicero stand as the best poet and orator): see Mindt 2014, 73. *Vell. Pat.* 1.17.3 sets Cicero as the first noteworthy, and best, Roman orator. See also *Luc.* 7.62-63.

²⁰⁷ See Keeline 2018, 77. *Prop.* 3.21.27 (*studium linguae, Demosthenis arma*), *Juv.* 10.114 (*eloquium aut famam Demosthenis aut Ciceronis*).

²⁰⁸ Ax 1990, 141 underlines the pervasive notion of the Latin authors’ *aemulatio* of the Greeks. Much of the overview is framed as a competition; Quintilian takes the role of a judge in an agon. See e.g. on Hesiod *Inst.* 10.1.52, on Antimachus 10.1.53, on Alcaeus 10.1.63.

entertainment he provides with the organisation of a gladiatorial show.²⁰⁹ Quintilian's claim to risk bringing a fight (*pugnam*) upon himself may simply be activating, or building on, this semantic field pervading the chapter: the 'fight' risks spilling from the 'arena' of the authors into the 'crowd' of literary critics. That we should not take Quintilian's disclaimer too literally also appears from the fact that he does go on to describe the qualities of Cicero and Demosthenes by way of comparison despite first denying his intent to do so:

Quorum ego uirtutes plerasque arbitror similes, consilium, ordinem, diuidendi praeparandi probandi rationem, omnia denique quae sunt inuentionis. In eloquendo est aliqua diuersitas: densior ille, hic copiosior, ille concludit adstrictius, hic latius, pugnat ille acumine semper, hic frequenter et pondere, illic nihil detrahi potest, hic nihil adici, curae plus in illo, in hoc naturae. (Inst. 10.1.106)

"Most of their qualities are, I think, similar: judgement, strategy, the method of subdividing, preparing, proving, finally everything pertaining to invention. Regarding elocution there are some differences: that one [Demosthenes] is more concise, this one [Cicero] more expansive, that one ends on shorter periods, this one with longer ones, that one fights always with the sword's point, this one also often with his weight, from that one nothing can be taken away, to this one nothing can be added, that one has more diligence, this one more talent".

The fight imagery continues. These respective characterizations correspond to other passages in the *Institutio*: Cicero and Demosthenes are often paired, the former's style is said to be tendentially exuberant, the latter's drier.²¹⁰ Cicero or his eloquence are repeatedly characterised as divine, whereas Demosthenes is said to have overcome natural deficiencies through self-discipline and training.²¹¹ Here at least, Quintilian is anachronistically pitting the two authors in a 'fight' against each other, ignoring the divides of time, space and language, not too unlike Livy speculating about what would have

²⁰⁹ Cf. Sen. *Controv.* 4 *pr.* 2. Similarly, in *Controv.* 7 *pr.* 1, Seneca says that his sons asked him daily about Albucius and that he will not put them off any longer, implying that he purposefully waited to satisfy their curiosity: see Fairweather 1981, 29; 37-39.

²¹⁰ At Inst. 3.8.5., Demosthenes' and Cicero's *Philippics* are paired; at 3.8.65, both are said to show *eloquentiae lumen* in any kind of speech; they are also paired at 4.1.66; 5.13.42; 9.4.36; 12.2.22-23 (as having studied philosophy); 12.10.54 (on being known through their writings). See on their style 12.10.52: Demosthenes is described as "much more concise" (*strictior multo*) than Cicero. We find a comparable judgement at [Longinus], *Subl.* 12.4.

²¹¹ For such praise of Cicero see esp. Inst. 1.6.18 (*M Tullius ... diuine ut omnia exequitur*); 2.16.7 (*diuina eloquentia*); 4.1.70 (*Diuina ... ironia*); 4.3.14 (*diuinus orator*); 11.1.62 (*diuine*). See on Demosthenes' training esp. Inst. 1.11.5; 10.3.24; 11.3.54; 11.3.68; 11.3.130. Compare Cic. *De or.* 1.89; 1.260-61, *Brut.* 151, *Orat.* 15, *Div.* 2.96; Val. Max. 8.7(ext).1; Plut. *Dem.* 5.7, 7.3; 11.1-2, Apul. *Apol.* 15. For Habinek 2004, 20, the stories about Demosthenes' training correspond to his political vision, in which Athens maintains its independence through discipline and patience. See Bishop 2015, 180-81 on Cicero's parallelisation of himself with Demosthenes on the grounds of his hard training. Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 4.4 on Cicero motivating his trip to Asia after delivering his *Pro Roscio Amerino* through a physical weakness.

happened, had Macedonians and Romans clashed.²¹² The continued use of the *hic-ille* contraposition suggests that readers are expected to be familiar with the qualities of each orator, which seems plausible in view of similar evaluations elsewhere.²¹³ Clear primacy is given to Cicero for the arousal of laughter and pathos:

Salibus certe et commiseratione, quae duo plurimum <in> adfectibus ualent, uincimus. Et fortasse epilogos illi mos ciuitatis abstulerit, sed et nobis illa quae Attici mirantur diuersa Latini sermonis ratio minus permiserit. In epistulis quidem, quamquam sunt utriusque, dialogisue, quibus nihil ille, nulla contentio est. (Inst. 10.1.107)

“Regarding jokes and rousing pathos, the two qualities which are most powerful among the emotions, we win. And perhaps the conventions of his [Demosthenes’] city took epilogues away from him, but to us as well, those elements which are admired in Attic speech were less permitted by the different rationale of Latin speech. In letters, certainly, even if they are extant by both authors, and in dialogues, of which he [Demosthenes] did not write any, there is no competition at all.”

The first person plural *uincimus* continues the fight imagery and opens a semi-patriotic dimension which strengthens the initial rebuttal of the criticism Quintilian claims to expect: ‘our’ team is the Latin one, everyone should agree on Cicero as the champion if Latin literature, not Greek, is to win the contest. The disadvantages faced by the two orators balance each other out.²¹⁴ However, Cicero’s struggle against the structural inadequacies of the Latin language seems a weightier obstacle than the one faced by Demosthenes, posed by convention. If so, the implication would be that ‘our’ man was, in fact, better than his adversary, because he achieved parity in this ‘fight’ with less adequate ‘weapons’ at his disposal. This is confirmed by the adjudication of victory to him for all non-oratorical production.²¹⁵

It seems safe to say that for Quintilian, Cicero does not only equal, but surpasses, Demosthenes, giving Latin literature a lead.²¹⁶ This also appears from the following ‘admission’:

²¹² Livy, 9.17-19, on which see Morello 2002, 62-63.

²¹³ Cf. Plut. *Dem.* 8.2-3: Demosthenes, rarely speaking *extempore*, conveyed the impression of not having much natural talent (οὐκ εὐφρης ὢν). Conversely, see *Cic.* 2.2 on Cicero’s talent making him stand out as a boy.

²¹⁴ See on the notion that arousing the emotions was prohibited in Athens Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 933; Russell 2001, vol. 1, 371, who points to *Inst.* 2.16.4; 6.1.7 and Arist. *Rh.* 1354a23. See on the topos of the poverty of Latin compared to Greek in Quintilian’s overview Fögen 2000, 154.

²¹⁵ Cicero also opens the section on Roman philosophers and is described as *Platonis aemulus* (*Inst.* 10.1.123). Cicero refers to Demosthenes’ letters at *Brut.* 121; *Orat.* 15. Plut. *Comp. Cic. et Dem.* 1.2 similarly highlights that Demosthenes devoted himself exclusively to oratory, while Cicero also wrote in other genres.

²¹⁶ According to Reiff 1959, 99, Quintilian has to admit (“muss ... zugeben”) the superiority of Demosthenes over Cicero, which seems a somewhat surprising conclusion.

Cedendum uero in hoc, quod et prior fuit et ex magna parte Ciceronem quantus est fecit. Nam mihi uidetur M. Tullius, cum se totum ad imitationem Graecorum contulisset, effinxisse uim Demosthenis, copiam Platonis, iucunditatem Isocratis. Nec uero quod in quoque optimum fuit studio consecutus est tantum, sed plurimas uel potius omnes ex se ipso uirtutes extulit immortalis ingenii beatissima ubertas. (Inst. 10.1.108-9)

“We must however give in regarding the fact that he [Demosthenes] both came earlier and, to a great extent, made Cicero as great as he is. For to me it seems that Cicero, once he had fully devoted himself to the imitation of the Greeks, managed to reproduce the forcefulness of Demosthenes, the abundance of Plato, the pleasantness of Isocrates. However, he did not merely achieve what was best in each of them through his effort, but the copious fullness of his immortal genius brought forward most, or rather all, qualities out of himself.”

Cicero’s achievement is presented as an example of good *imitatio*, as later described in *Inst.* 10.2 (see §1.2.1): he eclectically adopted the best and most characteristic features of Demosthenes, Plato and Isocrates.²¹⁷ Being a good imitator made him worthy of imitation – an encouraging example for students. And again, we see how Quintilian himself selectively appropriates one aspect of Cicero’s writing over another as it fits his argument: considering only his practice, not his theory, which on the question of *imitatio* differs from his own, he can claim him as an authority for his approach. The concluding statement that the ultimate reason for Cicero’s success was his talent resonates with the stress laid, throughout the *Institutio* (which I have called proleptic: §1.2.1) on the fact that the pupil needs good teachers, but also effort and talent to succeed. I will come back to the “fullness” of Cicero’s talent in the next section.

Quintilian also mentions Cicero’s reception by contemporaries and later generations as a measure of his success:

Quare non inmerito ab hominibus aetatis suae regnare in iudiciis dictus est, apud posteros uero id consecutus ut Cicero iam non hominis nomen sed eloquentiae habeatur. Hunc igitur spectemus, hoc propositum nobis sit exemplum, ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero ualde placebit. (Inst. 10.1.112)

“Because of this, he was not undeservedly said to reign in the courts by the men of his time, and among later generations he achieved that Cicero now is not held to be the name of a person, but of eloquence itself. Let us therefore look to him, let this example be set before us, let him know that he has made progress who strongly likes Cicero.”

²¹⁷ Demosthenes’ style is evaluated similarly at Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 8.

Cicero's name is said to be as a case of antonomasia.²¹⁸ Indeed, when explaining antonomasia, Quintilian adduces the equation of Cicero with Roman eloquence as a good example, in prose, of this otherwise more poetic trope (8.6.29). This contradicts the initial implication of controversy and supports the impression that it was a device to attract the reader's attention. Considering Cicero's defensiveness in the *Pro Sulla* about Torquatus' complaint that he cannot bear Cicero's *regnum*, the choice of verb (*regnare*) is interesting.²¹⁹ One wonders whether Quintilian means to lend an ironical twist to the compliment, but this would not fit this context, and he also employs *regnare* elsewhere to describe the power of oratory.²²⁰ It rather seems to underline Cicero's potency by continuing the agonistic language: he was victorious over Roman opponents, just as he was over Demosthenes. The remark that someone will know that he has made progress when he likes Cicero sets him as the standard against which didactic progress is measured. Like Vergil and Homer, Cicero receives a normative, 'canonical' function within training: he is the central author pupils should study when first reading Latin, and he should inform their tastes and thus their subsequent judgement of other writers.

Quintilian's positive evaluation of Cicero presupposes that of Demosthenes: the argument that Cicero brought Latin literature to equal (or surpass) Greek would else be unconvincing. Demosthenes, opening the account of Greek orators, was earlier described as "by far the best" (*longe princeps*) of Greek (not Latin!) orators and "almost the law of speaking" (10.1.76: *paene lex orandi*).²²¹ The "almost" reminds readers that Demosthenes did not reach perfection, but there is no hint at possible controversy as in Cicero's case. His status as a standard against which others should be measured is performed through the formulation of the ensuing evaluation of Aischines entirely as a comparison (10.1.77).

Demosthenes' and Cicero's position as the first Greek and Roman orators to be discussed gives them prominence and sets them in parallel to Homer and Vergil, first in the series of Greek (10.1.46-51) and Roman (10.1.85-86) poets. Furthermore, Cicero's and Vergil's evaluations are similar insofar as they are compared to Demosthenes and Homer respectively. Quintilian reports that he once asked Domitius Afer which poet came nearest to Homer, and that Afer answered that Vergil took the second place, however closer to a first than to a third (10.1.85).²²² The little anecdote, showing Quintilian in his student days, contributes to his authority insofar as it sets him into a didactic tradition.²²³ The two poets' respective strengths are characterized thus:

²¹⁸ See on this, and on the tension it creates between individual person and general principle Möller 2003, 165.

²¹⁹ Esp. Cic. *Sull.* 21.

²²⁰ *Inst.* 6.2.4 (about the emotions: *hic eloquentia regnat*); 7.4.24 (about disposition; *eloquentiae est opus: hic regnat, hic imperat, hic sola uincit*); 11.1.181 (about adapting performance to individuals: *necesse est ... regnare maxime modum*). At Cic. *Orat.* 128 we also find this verb in connection with the emotions: ... *quod παθητικὸν nominant, quo perturbantur animi et concitantur, in quo uno regnat oratio*. See Aßfahl 1932, 73.

²²¹ Compare. Plin. *Ep.* 9.26.8: *Demosthenes ipse, ille norma oratoris et regula*.

²²² See Gale 2004, xiv on the tendency of Latin writers to trace literary ancestry back to Greek models.

²²³ Compare Whitton 2019, 22-23 on how Pliny creates a chain of intimacy and constructs didactic authority for himself by mentioning Quintilian as his teacher and entrusting an anecdote about his own teacher Domitius Afer to him (*Ep.* 2.14.9-12).

Et hercule ut illi naturae caelesti atque immortalī cesserimus, ita curae et diligentiae uel ideo in hoc plus est, quod fuit magis laborandum, et quantum eminentibus uincimur, fortasse aequalitate pensamus. (Inst. 10.1.86)

“And, by Hercules, as we had to yield to that divine and immortal genius, so in this one [Vergil] there is more care and diligence, perhaps because he had to make more effort, and as much as ‘we’ are defeated in the greatest [passages], perhaps we compensate for them through our consistency.”

Here as well, the first-person plural implies an agon between Roman and Greek literature, and the contrast is built through the demonstratives *hic-ille*, assuming the reader’s familiarity with the evaluations. The weighting of talent and diligence is, however, reversed in respect to that of the two orators. It is the Greek poet who was blessed with divine genius, like the Roman orator.²²⁴ Contrarily, Vergil like Demosthenes had more carefulness and diligence. It appears that Cicero and Demosthenes are given a position analogous to that of Vergil and Homer within the curriculum in both primary and advanced training. If it is appropriate to speak of a ‘canon’ at all when discussing the *Institutio*, then here we have one. The four authors, thanks to their prominence in early training, are set as the standard against which pupils should measure any new texts. And since Cicero is the only one of them about whom it is implied that reservations may be held, his insertion into this group can be said to effectively ‘canonize’ him. Nevertheless, Quintilian does at times criticise Cicero’s style, and denies that he was the ideal orator, as I will discuss in the next two sections.

Cicero’s prominence is supported by Quintilian’s own citation practice throughout the *Institutio*: he is the author cited most often, followed by Vergil.²²⁵ Passages are constantly taken from his writings to elucidate elements of rhetorical theory. They contribute to the intelligibility of the handbook and showcase his excellence, confirming to readers that Quintilian’s praise is well-founded. At times, extensive citations from the Ciceronian corpus exemplify a point. For instance, at *Inst.* 5.14.20-23 Quintilian repeatedly cites the *Pro Milone* to elucidate *probatio*. At 11.3.47-51, he uses the opening of the same speech to explain how one should modulate the voice. Only a few paragraphs earlier (11.3.36-39), he had done the same with the start of the *Aeneid*. Not only in his theory, but also in his practice, Vergil and Cicero appear together as the most prominent texts in training. Cicero is taken up to Vergil’s level as a canonical Latin author, and even beyond it. While in the case of poetry, the divinely talented Greek author is said to remain unsurpassed by the closely approaching, more

²²⁴ Cic. *Orat.* 109-8 pairs Homer and Ennius as poets of divine talent (*divino ingenio*). Compare Val. Max. 8.8(ext).2, who calls Homer *ingeni caelestis uates*, and Ovid’s evaluation of Callimachus at *Am.* 1.15.13: *Battiades semper toto cantabitur orbe: / quamuis ingenio non ualeat, arte ualeat.*

²²⁵ See Odgers 1933, 187.

diligent, Latin one, in the case of the two orators, the order is inverted: the diligent Demosthenes is surpassed by the immortally talented Cicero, who brought Latin literature to its – provisional – pinnacle.

2.2.2 Criticising Cicero: On Laughter (*Inst.* 6.3) and Aptness (*Inst.* 11.1)

As we have seen, Quintilian ‘canonizes’ Cicero by giving him a place of honour in the educational curriculum and defining him as the best Latin orator (and generally author) who ever lived. He quotes often and extensively from him and employs him as a theoretical source. One effect of praise can, however, be to make criticism more credible (*Inst.* 3.7.24).²²⁶ In the following discussion, I will take the chapters on laughter (6.3) and on appropriateness (11.1) to illustrate how Quintilian sometimes ventures to criticise Cicero’s practice.²²⁷ As we will see, there are various links between the discussions on the two topics, and they both entail a significant ethical component. Criticising Cicero in connection with them, Quintilian simultaneously points out stylistic and moral deficiencies. This effectively prepares the ground for his denial that Cicero was the ideal orator (§2.2.3). Relativizing, to some extent at least, the status of Cicero as the overbearing rhetorical super-star is important for the didactic conception of the *Institutio* insofar as his identification with the ideal orator would leave no scope for its didactic goal, the education of the perfect orator.

In the chapter on laughter (*Inst.* 6.3), as in much of the *Institutio*, Cicero is Quintilian’s most important theoretical model. At *De or.* 2.216-90, laughter is discussed by the character of the witty Caesar Strabo, granting the earliest extensive discussion of this subject in rhetorical theory.²²⁸ Quintilian follows Cicero’s lead in regarding laughter as an emotion, not as a relaxation of the spirit like Aristotle, and in treating it after *ethos* and *pathos* (*Inst.* 6.1-2).²²⁹ However, he also sets it into his discussion of a part of the speech (*peroratio*), which corresponds to the approach taken in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. He strikes a compromise, as appears from his reminders that emotions and laughter can be aroused throughout a speech.²³⁰ Scholars have discussed the correspondences between Cicero’s and Quintilian’s treatments in detail; two main differences are Quintilian’s systematisation of the subject after a

²²⁶ Compare Plut. *De mal. Her.* 9 (856D) on alternating praise and criticism to make one’s argument more convincing, be it flattery or accusation.

²²⁷ Sometimes, Cicero is also criticised for minor stylistic shortcomings, for instance at *Inst.* 8.3.51 for tautologia, 8.6.73 for hyperbole, 8.3.51 for falling into ellipsis.

²²⁸ The treatise on comedy announced at Arist. *Poet.* 1449b 21-22 is famously lost, a specimen of the peripatetic poetological tradition on laughter is given by in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. No Hellenistic Greek rhetorical works on laughter survive: see Kroll 1934, 341. Caesar Strabo at *De or.* 2.217 dismisses them as boring. See on the conversational tone of *De or.* 2.216-90 Pinkster 1995, 248, and on terminological imprecisions in Cicero’s and Quintilian’s discussions of the subject Fernández 1997, 49.

²²⁹ Arist. *Rh.* 1371b34. Aristotle does not treat laughter with the emotions (πάθη) but in his discussion of characters (ἥθη), attributing a tendency to laughter and jokes to young people: see Kroll 1934, 342; Fernández 1997, 33. He does not discuss laughter as a rhetorical weapon, but mentions that Gorgias recommended to counter an opponent’s earnestness with laughter, his laughter with seriousness (*Rh.* 1419b6-7): see Kullmann 1995, 87.

²³⁰ *Inst.* 6.1.7; 6.1.30; 6.1.51; similarly in his discussion of the *ethos*-construction of the orator within the discussion of the first part of speech, *exordium* (*Inst.* 4.1.5; 4.1.28) or on the reasons to arouse them also in *narratio* (4.2.111). See on this Solmsen 1938, 396; Rabbie 2007, 209. Compare Antonius’ similar stance on the emotions at *De or.* 2.81-2; 323.

tripartition drawn from peripatetic ethics (6.3.23: there are “jokes made at the expense of others”, “of ourselves”, and “of neutral things”: *ridicula ex aliis, ex nobis, ex rebus mediis*) and his section on “urbanity” (*urbanitas*: 6.3.102-112) which engages with a treatise by the Augustan epigrammatist Domitius Marsus.²³¹ As in the chapter on *memoria*, Quintilian occasionally refers not to the character of the dialogue, but to Cicero himself, thus showing he attributes the information to him directly (6.3.8; 18; 23; 43. Compare 11.2.26: see §2.1.1).²³²

We have already seen that Quintilian attributes ‘victory’ to Cicero over Demosthenes regarding jokes (10.1.107). At the start of 6.3, he issues a warning: these two orators’ difficulties with arousing laughter show it is a difficult matter: *plerique Demostheni facultatem defuisse huius rei credunt, Ciceroni modum* (6.3.1: “most think that Demosthenes lacked the ability for this thing, Cicero moderation”). He attributes this judgement to others. However, what he goes on to say shows that he agrees with it, at least partially.²³³ About Demosthenes, Quintilian remarks that it does not seem that he did not want to be funny. On the contrary, his few puns “clearly show that he did not dislike jokes, but rather that he was not very good at them” (6.3.2: *palam ostendunt non displicuisse illi iocos sed non contigisse*). That is, he tried, but failed to arouse laughter.²³⁴

Demosthenes’ failure is striking, considering his ability to overcome lack of talent through hard work (§2.2.1): for making jokes, natural talent (*natura*) appears to prevail over doctrine or training (*ars* or *exercitatio*: 3.5.1). Demosthenes stands for the problem of the uneasy balancing of talent, doctrine, and training pervading the *Institutio* from 1 *pr.* 26 onwards. Where the pupil’s talent is the decisive factor, the teacher’s influence is limited.²³⁵ Instead of sweeping this problem under the rug, Quintilian makes it explicit: *ut non ausim dicere carere omnino arte ... adfirmo praecipue positum in natura et occasione* (6.3.11: “even if I would not dare to say that it lacks art entirely ..., I state that it foremost depends on nature and opportunity”). He adds that the subject entails quite some “observation” (*observatio*), and that there are precepts about it composed by Greek and Latin authors (6.3.11). This corresponds to Crassus’ stance at *De or.* 2.232 that like rhetoric at large, (arousing) laughter is not an art, but “some kind of observation” (*observatio quaedam*) which cannot be taught systematically, but serves to check whether “what we achieve through natural talent, effort and training” (*quae natura, quae studio, quae exercitatione consequimur*) is good or bad.²³⁶ In the *Institutio* itself, *observatio* is

²³¹ Cicero does not employ this subdivision: see Kroll 1934, 345; Kühnert 1962, 307-8. See on the differences between Quintilian’s notion of *urbanitas* and the one he attributes to Domitius Marsus Ramage 1959, 252, Saint-Denis 1965, 145 and Ramage 1973, 105. For Celentano 2000, 268, Quintilian’s didactic approach makes him discuss a topic recently debated.

²³² See Mayer 2003, 78 on Greek and Roman writers generally being inclined to take speakers in dialogues as representing the writer’s view.

²³³ Cicero himself had taken a similar approach regarding Demosthenes (*Orat.* 90).

²³⁴ Plut. *Comp. Cic. et Dem.* 1.3-4 also highlights that Demosthenes was rather serious, Cicero sometimes became scurrilous.

²³⁵ See Desbordes 1998, 309.

²³⁶ Crassus’ stance is more moderate than the one initially taken by Caesar Strabo, who had negated any artfulness for laughter (*De or.* 2.219).

posited as the starting point of rhetorical art (*Inst.* 3.2.2), a necessary, but insufficient condition.²³⁷ What makes this subject hard to teach is the predominance of *natura* particularly in its performative aspect (6.3.12) – ironically, considering the importance which Demosthenes attributed to performance.²³⁸ Quintilian even denies any possibility of training for this subject: *Accedit difficultati quod eius rei nulla exercitatio est, nulli praeceptores* (6.3.14: “What adds to the difficulty, is that there is no training, no teachers for this subject”). This poses a didactic problem, especially considering the ambitious goal of the *Institutio*: how to create the ideal orator, if lack of talent can pose an insurmountable barrier, and if there are topics which cannot be taught at all? However, Quintilian does proceed to teach it, framing it through structures taken from rhetorical theory.²³⁹ He also points to a strategy he adopted in his own classroom: he provided materials for declamations on humorous topics which the students would perform on festive days, to their delight and benefit (6.3.15-16).²⁴⁰ As often, by referring to his own experience ‘outside’ the work he underpins his didactic authority and equips future teachers with a solution to the difficulties outlined. This is a characteristic strategy of the *Institutio*: instead of ignoring didactic issues which could undermine his authority, he thematises them and proceeds to defuse them.

Cicero, conversely, exemplifies a different set of problems posed by laughter and by rhetoric at large. He is said to have lacked moderation in his wit:

Noster uero non solum extra iudicia sed in ipsis etiam orationibus habitus est nimius risus adfectator. Mihi quidem, siue id recte iudico siue amore inmodico praecipui in eloquentia uiri labor, mira quaedam in eo uidetur fuisse urbanitas. (*Inst.* 6.3.3)

“Our man indeed was thought to be too keen to make the audience laugh not only outside of a forensic setting, but even in his very speeches. To me, however, be it that I judge this correctly or that I am making a mistake due to my excessive love for this man of outstanding eloquence, it seems that he possessed remarkable urbanity.”

Quintilian makes a show of introducing this opinion reluctantly and contraposing his own more positive evaluation to it. As in the comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes in book 10, there is a patriotic touch

²³⁷ Accordingly, as Kroll 1934, 344 remarks, the treatment of the kinds of the laughable (*genera ridiculi*) at *De or.* 2.240-89 is more a collection of anecdotes than a thorough theoretical treatment. Quintilian adopts some of the jokes and integrates some new ones which he may have drawn from collections of jokes (*risibilia*): see Sehlmeier 1912, 56.

²³⁸ Quintilian at *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 27 or 12.5.5 underlines the importance of *natura* in the domain of *actio/peroratio*, and at *Inst.* 11.3.11-13 takes the balanced stance that *natura* plays the most important part, but training should not be neglected. See Plut. *Dem.* 7.1-3 and *Cic.* 5.3-4 on the relevance that Demosthenes and Cicero attributed to performance, and on both being advised by actors. See *Inst.* 11.3.6; *Cic. De or.* 3.213; *Orat.* 56 on Demosthenes attributing the highest importance to performance. Val. Max. 8.10.*pr.*3 remarks that Cicero agrees with Demosthenes on this.

²³⁹ He says *inter alia* that there are both an *inuentio* and an *elocutio* (*Inst.* 6.3.36) of jokes; *Cic. De or.* 2.248 also mentions *inuentio*, but not *elocutio*.

²⁴⁰ See on wit and self-display as important elements of declamation generally Gunderson 2017, 270.

in the use of the first-person pronoun. However, in the *siue ... siue* clause he concedes the possibility of a mistake.²⁴¹ Furthermore, he motivates his positive opinion by saying that both in daily conversation and debates and interrogations he was eminently witty, and that what he said “somewhat frigidly” (*frigidius*) against Verres he attributed to witnesses (6.3.4).²⁴² This is a first admission that there were indeed some poorer jokes by Cicero. The impression that, after initially rejecting the anonymous criticism, Quintilian at least partially agrees with it is reinforced by the subsequent counterfactual wish:

Vtinamque libertus eius Tiro, aut alius, quisquis fuit, qui tris hac de re libros edidit, parcius dictorum numero indulgissent et plus iudicii in eligendis quam in congerendis studii adhibuissent: minus obiectus calumniantibus foret, qui tamen nunc quoque, ut in omni eius ingenio, facilius quod reici quam quod adici possit inuenient. (Inst. 6.3.5)

“If only his freedman Tiro, or someone else, whoever it was who edited three books on this topic, had been more selective regarding the number of his jokes and had applied more judgement in choosing them, than effort in collecting them: he would have been less exposed to detractors, who still, even now, like regarding his talent generally, will find more easily something which can be rejected than which can be left out.”

Through this wish, Quintilian blames the compiler for Cicero’s jokes, rather than Cicero himself. However, this implies that some of his jokes were indeed so poor that they should have been omitted.²⁴³ The information that Cicero’s detractors dared to say that he was “sometimes frigid in his jokes” (12.10.12: *in salibus aliquando frigidum*) is later reiterated. Within the chapter on laughter, many examples of good jokes are drawn from Cicero, but some are also cited as tasteless.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, the opposition of Cicero’s tendency to excess to Demosthenes’ restraint agrees with the comparative evaluation of Demosthenes as less, Cicero as more exuberant at 10.1.105-6.

Other authors also tell us about the reception of Cicero as excessively witty; Plutarch claims that Cato sarcastically called him “witty consul” (*Comp. Cic. et Dem.* 1.5: γελοῖον ... ὕπατον) and according to Macrobius he was nicknamed a “consular buffoon” (*Macr. Sat.* 2.1.12: *consularem ... scurram*).²⁴⁵ As scholars have shown, for the ‘new man’ Cicero, who built his career on eloquence, not ancestry, the epithet *scurra*, with its implications of garrulity and connection to the socially dubious

²⁴¹ Quintilian employs an analogous expression (*nisi labor eius amore*) in regard to Horace at *Inst.* 10.1.94.

²⁴² The literary critical metaphor of “frigidity” is already used at *Arist. Rh.* 1406a18.

²⁴³ Arndt 1904, 46 and Saint-Denis 1965, 113 do not see any critical nuance in Quintilian’s judgement. But for Beard 2014, 103-4, Quintilian admits that Cicero may sometimes have gone into the direction of a *scurra*.

²⁴⁴ See *Inst.* 6.3.47; 6.3.48; 6.3.55. *Plut. Cic.* 7.5 reports some witticisms of Cicero’s speech against Verres, including the play on his name which Quintilian criticises, and at *Cic.* 27.1 states that Cicero incurred hate through mean jokes. See Fotheringham 2015, 197 on *Plut. Cic.* 24-27 presenting unpopular traits of Cicero’s oratory as a partial explanation of his change of fortunes.

²⁴⁵ Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 517 points to these two passages.

domain of the theatre was particularly offensive.²⁴⁶ Failing to restrain his wittiness, he undermines his own *auctoritas*.

Quintilian himself gives some clues about why Cicero's excessive tendency to arouse laughter would be problematic. While admitting the power of laughter, he calls it a *res levis* (6.3.8: "foolish thing") often elicited by, precisely, *scurrae*, mimes, and the ignorant. Following Cicero himself, who already expresses a concern with the potential of laughter to socially undermine the speaker, he says that scurrile and actor-like, obscene jesting is unacceptable, and not every joke suits the orator.²⁴⁷ Accordingly, he only devotes a brief section to the jokes *ex nobis*, dismissing them as unsuitable (6.3.82). Already about children, Quintilian says that it is a sign of bad character if they imitate others to make people laugh (1.3.2). There are other problems, too:

Adfert autem rei summam difficultatem primum quod ridiculum dictum plerumque falsum est [hoc semper humile], saepe ex industria deprauatum, praeterea numquam honorificum. ... Praeterea non una ratione moueri solet: neque enim acute tantum ac uenuste, sed stulte iracunde timide dicta ac facta ridentur, ideoque anceps eius rei ratio est, quod a derisu non procul abest risus. Habet enim, ut Cicero dicit, sedem in deformitate aliqua et turpitudine: quae cum in aliis demonstrantur, urbanitas, cum in ipsos dicentis reccidunt, stultitia uocantur (Inst. 6.3.6-8).

"What makes this subject eminently difficult is, firstly, that a funny saying is mostly wrong [that is always lowly], often corrupted on purpose, and, besides, never honourable. ... Besides, it is usually evoked not only in one way: things that are said and done not only acutely and wittily, but also stupidly, angrily, timidly are laughed about; therefore, the mechanism of this thing is a double-edged matter, since laughter is not far from derision. For, as Cicero says, it lies in some sort of deformity and ugliness: which, when it is pointed out in others, is called urbanity, if it falls back onto the speakers themselves, stupidity."

Why is a joke corrupted on purpose? Presumably because, if the orator cannot find anything stupid to point out in his opponent, he will have to invent something to make him look so. And further, the differentiation *risus-derisus* recalls Pl. *Symp.* 189b4-7, where Aristophanes' character expresses the

²⁴⁶ See on the importance of building authority through his oratory for Cicero Blom 2010, 10, and on the implications of *scurra* Ramage 1973, 30 and Corbett 1986, 34-38.

²⁴⁷ *Inst.* 6.3.25; 6.3.28-29; 6.3.35; 6.3.46; 6.3.83. See esp. *De or.* 2.218; 2.239. Rabbie 2007, 207-8 reads Cicero's theoretical discussion of laughter as an attempt to legitimize his own penchant for jokes. See Perl 1982, 59 on how despite Caesar Strabo's treatment of the question "how far" (*quatenus*: *De or.* 2.236) and his cautionary remarks, various jokes he presents would now be considered inappropriate. As Guérin 2019, 141 writes, self-control plays a central role in Cicero's discussion, and social acceptance sets the boundaries of jesting. See on this also Kish 2021, 200-4. See also Viljamaa 1994, 88 on Cicero and Quintilian pointing to the boundaries of wit. At *Orat.* 73, Cicero extends the question *quatenus* to speech generally.

fear that his audience may laugh not about his words, but instead about him as a speaker.²⁴⁸ The Cicero-passage Quintilian is referring to is *De or.* 2.236: *Locus autem et regio quasi ridiculi ... turpitudine et deformitate quadam continetur*. (“But the place and, so to say, the region of ridicule ... is contained by some kind of ugliness and deformity”). This passage in turn looks back to Aristotle’s definition of comedy at the start of the *Poetics*: comedy brings on stage people who are worse than in reality, whereas tragedy displays those who are better (*Poet.* 1448a16-18).²⁴⁹ What is ridiculous is a small part of what is ugly, a mistake and evil which is not hurtful or causes suffering (*Poet.* 1449a 32-37).²⁵⁰ An orator’s urbanity and connected social status is sanctioned by laughter, if he manages to show, or make up, something stupid (and therefore ugly) in an opponent.²⁵¹ However, this status is endangered if the laughter instead falls back onto himself: he becomes an object of *derisus*, instead of arousing *risus*.²⁵² Quintilian mentions the risk of falling into ridicule repeatedly in the *Institutio*, which shows the danger he attributes to it.²⁵³ The fine line between wit and ridicule emerges from a comment about jokes *ex nobis*: *Namque eadem quae si imprudentibus excidant stulta sunt, si simulamus uenusta creduntur* (6.3.23: “For the same things, which are stupid if they slip out of someone inadvertently, are thought to be witty if we fake them”). The same thought is later reiterated regarding hyperbole:

Peruenit haec res frequentissime ad risum: qui si captatus est, urbanitatis, sin aliter, stultitiae nomen adsequitur. (*Inst.* 8.6.74)

“This thing most frequently raises laughter: which, if it was done purposefully, is called urbanity, if not, stupidity.”

²⁴⁸ Pl. *Symp.* 189b4-7 (γελοῖα ... καταγέλαστα); see Kullmann 1995, 82. Compare *Inst.* 8.3.23 on excessive use of *humilitas*: *Res quidem praecipue in scholis anceps et frequenter causa risus...*

²⁴⁹ Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 523 remarks on the similarity of the definitions. As Monaco 1970, 14 writes, that Quintilian only mentions Cicero may indicate that he did not know the *Poetics*.

²⁵⁰ As an ugly face is ugly and deformed without suffering: Arist. *Poet.* 1448a16-18. As Pack 1938, 410 writes, this is a key difference from the tragic hamartema, which brings disproportionately great suffering upon the characters. See on the parallel between Aristotle’s definitions of comedy and tragedy e.g. Flashar 1994, 60; Fernández 1997, 35. See Kullmann 1995, 87 on the deviance from the norm into the direction of ugliness as the key feature of ridicule in Aristotle’s conception. The idea that it should not be hurtful separates it from earlier conceptions as expressed in the *Iliad*, where the gods laugh at Hephaistos’ limping (*Il.* A 599-600), and the soldiers at Odysseus’ beating of ugly Thersites (*Il.* B 270); see Garland 1994, 77-79; Arnould 1998, 15.

²⁵¹ Also for Aristotle, being funny (εὐτραπέλεια), is defined as a cultivated high-spiritedness, implying refinement and social standing: Arist. *Rh.* 1389b11. The social aspect is particularly evident at Arist. *EE* 1234a3-5, where the “witty” εὐτράπελος man is said to be between one who is “rustic” and “unwitty” (ἄγροικος and δυστράπελος) and a “jester” (βωμολόχος); similarly, *NE* 1128a4-b1. See on this Fortenbaugh 1984, 42; Schulten 2002, 210.

²⁵² See on the social connotations of *urbanitas* and other words like *facetus* Krostenko 2001, 94. See Pujante 1999, 173 on the political and exclusive reach of the concept of *urbanitas*. See also Ramage 1973, 56 on sophisticated wit and refined speaking as the markers distinguishing the urbane Roman from others. This exclusivity, requiring first-hand initiation, emerges from the sensory metaphor used to render *urbanitas* (*Inst.* 6.3.17: *gustum urbis*).

²⁵³ Cf. *Inst.* 1.5.71; 1.7.43; 1.9.21; 2.10.6; 4.2.65; 5.10.85; 5.13.7; 9.2.14; 10.3.21. There is a particularly fine line separating high pathos from ridicule, as exemplified at 6.1.38; 8.3.19.

Quintilian makes clear that it is the orator's intention which counts, and whether he managed to get it across: he must have made the joke on purpose, and the audience must understand that. Making a joke about someone else, this would mean pointing out, or inventing, something ugly (stupid) in the opponent. If successful, the orator will appear urbane. If not, he will himself seem stupid and be laughed at. This is a high-win, high-risk game. Quintilian's warnings about not exposing oneself to laughter and not irreparably damaging someone else's dignity show its disruptive power. If an orator employs this weapon badly, he risks undermining himself, if too successfully (too aggressively), he risks his morality, or certainly his *ethos* as a good man. And regardless of how successful he is, he may be perceived as a *scurra* if he jokes too often. Cicero, lacking restraint in his wit, exposes himself to a score of substantial risks which have the potential to substantially undermine his authority.

Let us move on to Quintilian's criticism of Cicero regarding "appropriateness" (*aptum*: *Inst.* 11.1). It brings to the fore issues akin to those raised by laughter. Quintilian starts the chapter by underlining the importance of the topic: *est meo quidem iudicio maxime necessaria* (11.1.1: "in my opinion at least it is of the highest importance").²⁵⁴ Correct, clear and ornate language is useless if not adapted to the content of the speech (11.1.2-3); the orator must know what he wants to achieve in each part of his speech and shape it accordingly.²⁵⁵ Untimely jesting serves as a negative example: where "pity" (*miseratio*), is needed, we should not dry the audience's tears through jokes (11.1.6). The chapter on laughter had started precisely with the remark that arousing laughter may be employed to sweep away sad emotions (6.3.1). This example itself makes a point to the linear reader: whether laughter or any other element of the orator's arsenal is useful depends on the context. Quintilian had initially subsumed appropriateness under ornament (1.5.1). Now, he broadens its domain and signals the relevance of the ensuing treatment by noting that it concerns also *inuentio* (11.1.7). Then, he adds a second definition:

Illud est diligentius docendum, eum demum dicere apte qui non solum quid expediat sed etiam quid deceat inspexerit (*Inst.* 11.1.8)

"What must be taught more diligently, is that only he speaks aptly who has examined not only what is useful, but also what is fitting."

Ethical considerations also determine appropriateness.²⁵⁶ Quintilian introduces this second criterion as equally, if not more, important. He adds that as a rule, what is fitting is also useful, and there is nothing which wins over or conversely alienates the judges more (11.1.9). This pre-empts the later argument that a good man is naturally more convincing than a bad one, since he does not have to constantly lie

²⁵⁴ See Fernández López 2010, 318 on the importance which Quintilian attributes to *aptum*.

²⁵⁵ Compare Arist. *Rh.* 1408a10-14.

²⁵⁶ This takes up the discussion in *Inst.* 3.8 about the balancing of what is honourable and what is useful.

about his ethical being (12.1.10-13).²⁵⁷ The second definition of appropriateness entails the coherence between the orator's speech and his life, persuasion and honour.

Before proceeding to discuss what is appropriate, Quintilian tells the reader what is not: he creates a negative foil and sets his positive definition against it. This is a prominent strategy in the *Institutio*.²⁵⁸ I have already discussed how in the *Preface*, he criticises other didactic figures before introducing his own project, and will later show how he contrasts the good orator and his style with philosophers and corrupt oratory (§§1.1.2; 3.2.1-3; 4.1.1-3). The breach of aptness he mentions first and treats at most length is self-praise (*iactatio*), and he criticises Cicero extensively for it.²⁵⁹ He starts by saying that any self-praise, especially praise of one's rhetorical abilities, "does not only spark annoyance in listeners, but mostly even hatred" (11.1.15: *adfertque audientibus non fastidium modo sed plerumque etiam odium*).²⁶⁰ For, he explains, the human mind has some sublime and upright quality about it that cannot bear anything superior to it. Hence, we willingly lift those who are lowly or subordinate themselves to us, since kindness kicks in when the spirit of competition is gone (11.1.15-16). Things are different when someone elevates himself above us:

At qui se supra modum extollit, premere ac despicere creditur nec tam se maiorem quam minores ceteros facere. Inde invident humiliores ..., rident superiores, improbant boni. Plerumque uero deprendas adrogantium falsam de se opinionem, sed in ueris quoque sufficit conscientia. (Inst. 11.1.16-17)

"But he who elevates himself too high is believed to put down and despise everyone else, and to demean them, rather than to aggrandize himself. Because of this, inferior people envy him ..., superior ones laugh, good ones condemn him. In most cases, however, one can observe a wrong opinion of themselves in those who are arrogant, whereas it is enough to be conscious of one's true qualities."

This is a strong warning against *iactatio*. It can provoke a visceral negative reaction, and its attribution to Cicero, to which I will come presently, does not cast him in a good light. Three types of people are credited with three types of reactions. Considering the common association of envy with lesser wealth and status, *humiliores* reads like a social evaluation.²⁶¹ This is confirmed by the differentiation between

²⁵⁷ Compare Cic. *De or.* 2.182.

²⁵⁸ For instance, in *Inst.* 8.2 *obscuritas* (8.2.12-21) is treated before *perspicuitas* (8.2.13-24); and the chapter on *ornatus* sets a discussion of various stylistic vices (8.3.41-60) before that of virtues.

²⁵⁹ Plutarch at *Cic.* 6.5 states that Cicero indulged in his praise of others and in his wish for glory; at *Cic.* 24.1-2, he remarks that he attracted hate by continuously praising himself, and adds that he even filled his writings and oratory with self-praise. Like Quintilian, he seems to regard this as worse. Cf. also *Comp. Cic. et Dem.* 2.1-2.

²⁶⁰ See Lowrie 2007, 98-99 on the problem of the impoliteness of self-praise for Cicero. Cicero himself formulates the unpleasantness of self-praise at *Div. Caec.* 36.

²⁶¹ Compare *Inst.* 12.8.14: *Nam plurimum refert inuidia reus an odio an contemptu laboret, quorum fere pars prima superiores, proxima pares, tertia humiliores premit.* Compare on the workings of envy Lucr. 3.75-77:

superiores and *boni*, which would be unnecessary if the former were superior regarding morality.²⁶² Self-praise is socially disruptive because it offends the *humiliores*. Furthermore, the condemnation of self-praise (implied to be an expression of arrogance) by the *boni* indicates that it is ethically problematic, indeed being perceived as the abasement of others.

Why do the *superiores* laugh? Quintilian does not say so, but a look back at his own chapter on laughter and at earlier definitions of comedy explains it. The information that those laughing are ‘superior’ corresponds to the Aristotelian definition of comedy as putting on the stage characters worse than the norm. Furthermore, Quintilian’s comment that arrogance (including self-praise) lies in a misperception of the self corresponds to the description of the workings of comedy in Plato’s *Philebos*. Socrates says that comic characters overestimate themselves regarding their intellectual capacities, their looks, and their wealth (*Phil.* 47d5-50d2).²⁶³ This is, according to him, a “vice” (πονηρία); Protarchos adds that it goes against the Delphic imperative to “know thyself” (48c6-e10: γνῶθι σαυτόν). This discrepancy between self-assessment and reality is what is comical (49b6-c4).²⁶⁴ Considering Quintilian’s own Aristotelian-Ciceronian definition of ridicule one could add that this kind of misperception of the self attracts *derisus* because it is stupid, and therefore ugly.

As seen above, Cicero, being excessively witty (according to his critics, and perhaps to Quintilian), risks several things: being scurrile, falling into ridicule himself and displaying excessive aggressiveness, thus putting at stake his social standing, his authority, and his morality and perception as moral. Indulging in *iactatio* exposes him to similar risks: self-praise is a form of arrogance, betrays a misconception of the self and thus stupidity. Accordingly, it is sanctioned by peers who are superior insofar as they have not made the same mistake. The inherently violent character of this sanctioning laughter explains why the *boni* would refrain from it. Their disapproval could be tied to the reaction of the *humiliores*, since *iactatio* like jokes, has the potential to hurt or at least offend them. This would also explain why *iactatio* breaches Quintilian’s second definition of *aptum* as speaking honourably.

Quintilian then devotes ten paragraphs (*Inst.* 11.1.17-26) to the anonymously reported criticism that Cicero engaged in *iactatio*, starting thus:

macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse potentem, / illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore / ipsi se in tenebris uolui caenoque queruntur; or Ov. *Met.* 2.780-82 within the personification of *Invidia* (*Met.* 2.760-86); Cupid’s laughter at Ov. *Am.* 1.1.3-4 at the poet’s go at writing epic may be read as a (playful) censure of his overblown self-confidence. Antonius at Cic. *De or.* 2.209 also pairs envy and self-praise: inferior people envy superior ones “if they boast excessively” (*si intolerantius se iactant*); before that, however, he states that “people envy foremost equal or inferior [people]” (*inuidet ... homines maxime paribus aut inferioribus*).

²⁶² Compare Tac. *Hist.* 2.10.1 on Vibius Crispus (*inter claros magis quam inter bonos*); see Ash 2007, 103.

²⁶³ Homer’s Thersites is the classic example of a man who speaks in a way not suiting his station: Ov. *Met.* 13.231-33, *Inst.* 3.7.19; 11.1.37, Front. *Eloc.* 2.7.11.

²⁶⁴ See on the maliciousness Plato seems to attribute to the public’s laughter Flashar 1994, 60; Fernández 1997, 36-37; Frede 1997, 286-88.

Reprehensus est in hac parte non mediocriter Cicero, quamquam is quidem rerum a se gestarum maior quam eloquentiae fuit in orationibus utique iactator. Et plerumque illud quoque non sine aliqua ratione fecit. (Inst. 11.1.17-18)

“In this regard, Cicero was criticised not little, even if he was, in any case, certainly more of a braggart about his deeds than about his eloquence in his speeches. And even that he mostly did not without some reason.”

As in the chapter on laughter, Quintilian attributes the criticism, the considerable scope of which he underlines through the litotes (*non mediocriter*), to others and makes a show of defending Cicero.²⁶⁵ Again, he balances between defence and (more or less) implicit criticism. Already by specifying that Cicero’s self-praise was of the less irritating kind and that there was a rationale behind it, he implicitly admits that he did engage in it.²⁶⁶ Then, he tells us that Cicero was (through his *iactatio*) either protecting those who had helped him in the oppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy or was reacting to the ill-will caused by his actions connected to it. His frequent reiteration of his actions during the consulate may appear not as a desire for glory, but rather as a self-defence (11.1.18) – against contemporaries as well as posterity, one could add. He never, Quintilian adds, overly claimed praise for his eloquence within a speech (11.1.19-20). Again, this more positive assessment is immediately relativized: Cicero did sometimes speak about it in his letters, and sometimes in his dialogues, although often through someone else’s character (11.1.21).²⁶⁷ Briefly interrupting his evaluation, Quintilian remarks that he does not know whether false modesty is better than praising oneself openly (11.1.21), and adds: *Ambitiosissimum gloriandi genus est etiam deridere* (11.1.22: “A most conceited kind of bragging is also to deride [someone]”). Again, laughter comes in as a problematic factor, and the reader is subtly reminded that Cicero had a penchant for jokes. Quintilian adds that one should, therefore, be praised by others, and that even then, as Demosthenes says, one should blush (Dem. *De cor.* 128). As elsewhere, Cicero and Demosthenes are paired. Quintilian’s reference to blushing seems interesting in a Flavian setting, since various authors report that it was a characteristic trait of Domitian. The modesty it expresses (and which Cicero contravenes through his *iactatio*) is a feature of Quintilian’s Flavian orator, even if excessive

²⁶⁵ As Lowrie 2007, 99 writes, Quintilian’s discussion reveals self-praise to be an issue. She argues that the crucial point is less Cicero’s self-praise than his attempt to make himself an exemplar, showing himself acting as an author instead of as the orator or politician he wants to be exemplary as; and his writing about himself detracts credibility from him as an author. Cf. similarly Narducci 2003, 88 on Cicero striving to appear foremost as a statesman, rather than as an intellectual, but founding his prestige on learning.

²⁶⁶ See Gibson 2003, 243 on Cicero countering the charge of self-praise by saying that he had to defend himself at *Dom.* 92-95 and on Quintilian presenting the same defence, even if manifesting some discomfort in doing so. Compare *Inst.* 3.7.6 on laudations also sometimes entailing elements of defence.

²⁶⁷ Cf. esp. Cic. *Brut.* 292-96.

shyness is rejected (*uerecundia*: see §3.2.1).²⁶⁸ Quintilian then concedes that he does not say that an orator may not sometimes (*aliquando*) speak about his deeds (*Inst.* 11.1.22). He adds:

Et M. Tullius saepe dicit de oppressa coniuratione Catilinae, sed modo id uirtuti senatus, modo prouidentiae deorum immortalium adsignat. Plerumque contra inimicos atque obtrectatores plus uindicat sibi: erant enim illa tuenda cum obicerentur. (*Inst.* 11.1.23)

“And Cicero often speaks about the crushed conspiracy of Catiline, but now he gives credit to the virtue of the senate, now to the providence of the immortal gods. Mostly it is when speaking against rivals and detractors that he claims more for himself: for they had to be defended when they were being held up against him.”

Quintilian adduces two extenuating factors: firstly, that Cicero softened the self-praise by crediting others for his success. Secondly, that he engaged in it because he was on the defensive.²⁶⁹ However, the specification that Cicero did it often (*saepe*) already outdoes the concession that an orator may sometimes speak about his deeds,²⁷⁰ and that he thanked the gods for them (among others) is a prelude to the counterfactual wish that he should have refrained from self-praise in his poetry:

In carminibus utinam pepercisset, quae non desierunt carpere maligni: ‘cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae’ et ‘o fortunatam natam me consule Romam!’ et Iouem illum a quo in concilium deorum aduocatur, et Mineruam quae artes eum edocuit: quae sibi ille secutus quaedam Graecorum exempla permiserat. (*Inst.* 11.1.24)

“Had he only been more sparing [with self-praise] in his poems, which malignant people never stopped pounding upon: ‘let weapons yield to the toga, let the laurel give way to the tongue’ and ‘o blessed Rome, born when I was consul!’ and that Jupiter by whom he is called into the council of the gods, and Minerva, who instructed him in the arts: these things he had allowed himself following some Greek models.”

²⁶⁸ See esp. Tac. *Hist.* 4.40.1, Suet. *Dom.* 2.2 on Domitian’s blushing and simulation of modesty. See Lana 1990, 304 on Quintilian setting *modestia*, as opposed to *libertas*, as a defining quality of the orator (*Inst.* 12.9.12; 12.10.73), which makes him a compliant servant of imperial power.

²⁶⁹ Just before, at *Inst.* 11.1.22, he refers to Dem. *De cor.* 128 for Demosthenes’ statement that one should even blush when someone else speaks about oneself, and *Ctes.* 4, where he speaks about his deeds but only to give responsibility to the man who made him act. Once again, we find Cicero and Demosthenes juxtaposed: Demosthenes is shown to be highly self-aware regarding self-praise, while Cicero is criticised.

²⁷⁰ Compare Plut. *Cat. mai.* 14.2-3 on Cato being rather generous in praising himself (τῶν ἰδίων ἐγκωμίων ἀφειδής); similarly, *Cat. mai.* 19.5. As Astin 1978, 10 puts it, Cato’s writings were “quite untinged with modesty”. See on the political relevance of Cato’s boasting about his military achievements Leigh 1995, 200-1.

Cicero did not only credit the gods with his actions – he even showed himself interacting with them. While distancing himself from these critics through the epithet (*maligni*), expressing ill-will and thus a negative bias, Quintilian’s counterfactual wish signals that their criticism is not unjustified.²⁷¹ This is exactly the procedure adopted at 6.3.5. No less than three passages of Ciceronian poetry illustrate his *iactatio*, of which the second one had already been cited at 9.4.41 for its cacophony (*fortunatam natam*). Quintilian presents the linear reader twice with the same famous objectionable verse, making sure it does not pass unnoticed.²⁷² Then, he adds two paragraphs (11.1.25-26) with examples of passages in which Cicero showed *fiducia* (“self-confidence”), rather than *iactatio*.

Overall, it appears that Quintilian presents a holistic view of Cicero’s literary production including all genres, as well as its imperfections. While *Inst.* 11.1 entails many examples of Cicero speaking aptly, it is notable that ten out of fourteen paragraphs on breaches of aptness are devoted to him. Treating *iactatio* in terms recalling his chapter on laughter, Quintilian reinforces the impression that Cicero fails similarly in both domains, which are both attributed a clear ethical edge. A subtle shadow is cast on both Cicero’s style and character.²⁷³ This prepares the ground for Quintilian’s denial in *Inst.* 12.1 that Cicero was the ideal orator, which I will discuss in the next section.

Turning away from Cicero, Quintilian devotes three more paragraphs to breaches of aptness. Confirming the earlier categorisation of *iactatio* as a sort of arrogance, he remarks: *Adrogantes et illi qui se iudicasse de causa nec aliter adfuturos fuisse proponunt* (11.1.27: “Also those (patrons) are arrogant who claim that they have [already] judged the cause and that they would not otherwise have supported it”).²⁷⁴ Here again, the linear reader is reminded that there is only a fine line separating appropriateness from inappropriateness: in his discussion of proems, Quintilian had written that the advocate will enhance his authority by conveying the impression that he took up the cause for honourable reasons, and reach the credibility of a ‘witness’ (*Inst.* 4.1.7). Aptness cannot be taught through definite rules, but depends on experience: this is why the student, who ideally improves as the work proceeds, is confronted with it only late in the work (see §1.2.1). And as we will see below (§3.2.2), aptness is a key element of Quintilian’s conception of the good orator, which makes the criticism of Cicero even more poignant.

Quintilian adds that an impudent, turbulent, angry way of speaking (11.1.29) is also bad and ends the section with a list of meaner vices including flattery, scurrility, lack of pudor, and generally a

²⁷¹ The stance taken at Plut. *Cic.* 4.3 that Cicero became not only the best Roman orator, but also the best Roman poet before others surpassed him, seems rather isolated.

²⁷² See Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 807 on the quotation. This seems to have been a well-known verse. See Sen. *Controv.* 3 *pr.* 8, Sen. *Dial.* 3.37.5, Juv. 10.114-26. Freudenburg 2014, 124 argues that Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.256 echoes Cicero’s verse to show how easily praise can become ridiculous. See Mindt 2014, 72 on Cicero as a paradigmatic bad poet at Mart. 2.89.3-4, and Volk 2013, 100-3 on unusual and innovative elements of Cicero’s epic (especially that the author is the protagonist and interacts with the gods, and the stress laid on civic rather than military achievements).

²⁷³ Quintilian’s procedure could be said to be similar to that which van der Blom 2010, 20 attributes to Cicero regarding the *mos maiorum*: upheld as an infallible parameter, but punctually criticised.

²⁷⁴ Compare Cic. *Mur.* 60.

neglect of one's authority. "These things generally happen to those who want to be either too charming or too witty" (11.1.30: *Quae fere accidunt eis qui nimium aut blandi esse aut ridiculi uolunt*). Again, laughter appears as a problematic factor. Perhaps, one could read this as a little jibe against the adulation often ascribed to imperial advisors.²⁷⁵ Then follows a more general statement:

Profert enim mores plerumque oratio et animi secreta detegit: nec sine causa Graeci prodiderunt ut uiuat quemque etiam dicere. (Inst. 11.1.30)

"For speech mostly shows character and lays bare the secrets of the soul: and the Greeks did not say without reason that how each man lives, he also speaks."

This is somewhat different from the Aristotelian conception of *ethos*: it is not the orator's speech that creates, for the audience, an impression of his character, but it is the soul which is betrayed by his speech.²⁷⁶ Not the orator's workmanship, but a necessary correspondence between life and character is at issue. This recalls a more pointed formulation by Seneca the Younger:

Hoc quod audire vulgo soles, quod apud Graecos in proverbium cessit: talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita. (Sen. Ep. 114.1)

"That [is] what you usually hear among the populace, which has become a proverb among the Greeks: men's speech was such as their life."

Even if the wording of the Quintilian passage differs from Seneca's, I would argue that it is closely modelled on it. Donald Russell remarks on this parallel.²⁷⁷ The idea is the same, and the reference to the Greek proverb presents a common element. Quintilian engages in an *amplificatio* of the Senecan passage, integrating *oratio* into the first sentence, and in the second making *vita* into *uiuat*, transforming the pithy *sententia* into a well-rounded, balanced sentence. The identical thought, including the reference to a Greek proverb, and the verbal resonances make it likely Sen. Ep. 114.1 should be the intertext here. For Quintilian, as for Seneca, the style is the man.

²⁷⁵ Such a combination of adulation and tasteless jesting (*facetis scurrilibus*) can be found e.g. in Tacitus' description of Vatinius at *Ann.* 15.34.2.

²⁷⁶ Arist. *Rh.* 1356a4-6. See Farrell 2003, 384 on the Platonic-Aristotelian notion that a poet's character is reflected by the type of poetry he writes. Compare Cic. *De or.* 2.184; 3.100 on how the orator showcases his character through his speech.

²⁷⁷ Russell 2001, vol. 5, 24. Edwards 2019, 291 points to Cic. *Tusc.* 5.47. See Tosi 1992, 71-72, §158 on the proverb appearing in Ael. Arist. *Rhet.* 2.392 (Οἷος ὁ τρόπος, τοιοῦτος ὁ λόγος) and originating in a statement of Socrates at Pl. *Resp.* 400d, on being attributed to Socrates also at Cic. *Tusc.* 5.16.47, and on further parallels, for which see also Otto 1962, 257 (under *oratio*).

As I will discuss in the next two chapters, this is a key notion underlying Quintilian's work. The rhetorical education he envisages has moral implications: the student following his advice will train his mind and speech consistently and thoroughly and will both become a good man and speak like one (§3.2.1-3).²⁷⁸ Instead, as we will see in §§4.1.1-3, someone who speaks in a way deviating from the norm Quintilian envisages can be criticised not only on stylistic, but also on moral grounds. If speech betrays the mind, style is not merely a performance adapted to an audience, but a defining characteristic of each speaker. This implies a rather static conception of style: while the student will improve through training (the *Institutio* would else be pointless), once the orator has reached maturity, style becomes an indicator of character.²⁷⁹ Accordingly, criticising Cicero's stylistic faults (and in two domains making flaws of character particularly obvious) Quintilian shows that he is not the *uir bonus dicendi peritus*. His reworking of the Senecan maxim to express this central concept is also interesting. As we will see in the last chapter (§§4.1.1; 4.1.3; 4.2.1-2), he engages in a rather (and more violently) Bloomian reception of Seneca as well, adopting literary critical opinions from him, but portraying him negatively.

2.2.3 Cicero the Ideal Orator?

As seen above, Quintilian sets Cicero as the best Latin author who ever lived, but also brings forward some substantial criticism. At the start of book twelve, he explicitly denies that Cicero was the ideal orator, as Cicero himself had done regarding Demosthenes (Cic. *Orat.* 104).²⁸⁰

After defining the orator as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (*Inst.* 12.1.1), Quintilian, feigning a dialogue with the public, argues that a real orator must necessarily be a good man (12.1.3-13).²⁸¹ Then, he addresses his imagined public's objections about Cicero and Demosthenes fitting this definition:

Nunc de iis dicendum est quae mihi quasi conspiratione quadam uulgi reclamari uidentur: 'Orator ergo Demosthenes non fuit? atqui malum uirum accepimus. Non Cicero? atqui huius quoque mores multi reppererunt.' (*Inst.* 12.1.14)

²⁷⁸ See Russell 1981, 122 and Döpp 1985, 159 on the ethical component of the rhetorical training Quintilian proposes. I would disagree with the view of Taekema 2003, 261 that Quintilian "does stress the need for an orator to be a good man, but does not suggest that becoming a good man is achieved through rhetorical training".

²⁷⁹ See Möller 2003, 100. See Ferriss-Hill 2012, 373-75; 385 on this principle as expressed in Old Comedy (esp. in Aristophanes' *Frogs*) or in Juv. 4.82. Compare Sen. *Ep.* 11.11 (Lucilius should choose a model *cuius tibi placuit et vita et oratio*).

²⁸⁰ Despite stating Demosthenes' primacy again and again, e.g. at Cic. *De or.* 3.71 or *Orat.* 6; 23.

²⁸¹ First, he argues that only a stupid man is bad, and that no stupid man will ever become an orator (*Inst.* 12.1.3-4). Then, that a bad mind could not fulfil the technical requirements of rhetorical training, because only a mind free from vices can be open to the pursuit of this most beautiful endeavour, oratory: good and bad emotions cannot coexist, and a mind focusing on such a great thing must be free from any other concerns (12.1.4-5). Compare Cicero's argument at *Caec.* 45-47 that serious study is irreconcilable with vices. Quintilian adds that a good man is more successful than a bad one because it is impossible to always deceive the public, who will be well-disposed if he seems good (*Inst.* 12.1.11-13). See on models for these arguments Austin 1948, 55-58. See Brinton 1983, 183 and Natali 1995, 165 on how Quintilian's concept of the orator's morality differs from Plato in that he regards it in terms of public behaviour, rather than of the inner condition of the soul.

“Now I must speak about those [questions] which seem to be shouted at me from a kind of conspiracy of the audience: ‘Was Demosthenes not an orator, then? Yet we heard that he was a bad man. Was not Cicero? Yet many criticised also his morals.’”

Conjuring up these interlocutors, Quintilian creates the impression of a lively attention towards his work – a recurrent strategy, first employed in the *Letter to Trypho*. The claim to controversy boosts interest. Implying that there is a widespread opinion of Demosthenes and Cicero as bad men, he once again puts forward an anonymised criticism to which he can give a response and also demonstrate his friendly attitude towards the two orators (see §2.2.2). He can both have his cake (criticise them) and eat it (defend them).²⁸² He retorts with a question of his own showing that the objections make him uncomfortable, and announcing his function as a mediator: *Quid agam? Magna responsi invidia subeunda est: mitigandae sunt prius aures* (12.1.14: “What should I do? I have to put up with a lot of ill-will against my answer: the ears must first be appeased”). Anticipating that his retort will be poorly received by the public, he implies his partisanship for the two orators, and lends more weight to any ensuing criticism. He claims that he does not believe all the allegations made against Demosthenes by his opponents, since he reads of his glorious policies and of his noble death (12.1.15), and that Cicero, in his opinion, lacked in no respect the intentions of an outstanding citizen. This, he continues, is shown by the fact that he handled his consulate very nobly, honourably administered his province and refused a place in the Commission of the Twenty and acted patriotically in the civil wars (12.1.16). Through the honorific summary of each orator’s career, Quintilian suggests that their vices were less extreme than alleged and tones down the reported criticism, subtly projecting his own identity as a reasonable man. Here as elsewhere, Cicero receives more space. A further criticism is reported:

Parum fortis uidetur quibusdam, quibus optime respondit ipse non se timidum in suscipiendis sed in prouidendis periculis: quod probauit morte quoque ipsa, quam praestantissimo suscepit animo. (Inst. 12.1.17)

“He seems not to be brave enough to some, to whom he himself answered very well by saying that he was not timid in taking up, but rather in foreseeing, dangers. This he also proved through his death itself, which he faced with outstanding courage.”

²⁸² One could maybe say that he dramatizes the potential multivalence of exemplars (on which see Krebs 2012, 149) by acknowledging that Cicero may, by some, be seen more negatively than by others.

The political nature of the murder, which cast a shadow onto the beginnings of the principate, is blurred by lack of detail.²⁸³ Cicero died honourably in an anonymised struggle, and can be co-opted by contemporary readers as a general model of noble behaviour.²⁸⁴ By Quintilian's time, his death was surrounded by a rich declamatory tradition, and it figures prominently in Seneca the Elder's work.²⁸⁵ In *Controv.* 7.2, Cicero's assassin Popillius is accused of ingratitude because Cicero had defended him from a charge of parricide.²⁸⁶ In *Suas.* 6, Cicero must be advised on whether to beg Antony for pardon, in *Suas.* 7, whether he should die, or stay alive but burn his writings.²⁸⁷ Seneca gives an overview of descriptions of Cicero's death, including Livy's (*Suas.* 6.17).²⁸⁸

Cicero's death concludes the *Periocha* of book 120 of Livy's work and may have been intended at first as a climactic conclusion of the work, marking the end of the Republic.²⁸⁹ Quintilian may have found it unnecessary to dwell on such a well-known event, and the lack of detail fits with his tendency to omit information which may be politically problematic (see §3.3.3). One could say that he is transforming Cicero's death from a political into a stylistic climax: at *Inst.* 12.10.13, he mentions it again in connection with the debate about Atticism and Asianism. During Cicero's lifetime, his contemporaries dared to attack him for his style (some of the criticisms Quintilian enumerates are pompousness, prolixity, and trivial jokes). But after he was killed by the triumphal proscription, those who hated him, who envied him, who strove to surpass him, and adulators of the new power

²⁸³ Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 6.21.1. The juncture *in suscipiendis causis* is reemployed at *Inst.* 12.7.1: see Whitton 2019, 332 on Plin. *Ep.* 6.29.1 echoing the latter passage.

²⁸⁴ Gell. *NA* 15.8.6-7 parallels the start and end of Demosthenes' and Cicero's careers, Plut. *Dem.* 3.2-4 their character, political careers and deaths; he also remarks that Demosthenes was not quite steadfast when taking up arms (13.1; 20.2) and better at praising virtues than at imitating them (14.2). See Fotheringham 2015, 199 on Plutarch's and Dio's reports on Cicero's crippling fear in the context of Milo's trial.

²⁸⁵ Quintilian knew Seneca the Elder's work (cf. *Inst.* 9.2.42). As Keeline 2018, 103; 137 writes, Quintilian mentions Cicero's death already at *Inst.* 3.8.46. See La Penna 2003, 157 on Cicero's death having no political significance for Quintilian except as an example of civic engagement, and Gowing 2005, 108-10 on Quintilian's depoliticization of oratory and historical exempla generally. Corbeill 2007, 257 argues that already in Seneca, the declaimers are concerned with Cicero's death and individual talent rather than his oratory and politics; similarly Kaster 1998, 257 and Lentano 2016, 7.

²⁸⁶ Seneca expresses doubts about this connection between Popillius and Cicero: *Controv.* 7.2.8. Plut. *Cic.* 48.1 reports that Cicero had defended Popillius, prosecuted for parricide. Livy, *Per.* 120 also names Popillius. Roller 1997, 125 argues that the charge of parricide originates in a rhetorical *color*, Lentano 2016, 14 suggests that Popillius could be read as a substitute for Octavian; Pigoñ 2018, 166 thinks that Cicero must have defended Popillius on some other account.

²⁸⁷ In Seneca, Cicero may be said to become a figure for reflection on the tension between memory and oblivion: he is also mentioned in relation to an actual case of book-burning, that of Titus Labienus (*Controv.* 10 *pr.* 6). According to Seneca, Labienus was the first to be thus punished, according to Tac. *Ann.* 1.72.3, Cassius Severus: see Hennig 1973, 247-48 on this discrepancy.

²⁸⁸ According to Seneca, almost no declaimer advised Cicero to beg for his life (*Suas.* 6.12; 7.10), and among historians only Asinius Pollio said he did (6.14-15). He summarises accounts of the episode: Livy's (6.17), Aufidius Bassus' (6.18), Cremutius Cordus' (6.19), Bruttidius Niger's (6.20-21). See Ash 1997, 200 on how at Plut. *Cic.* 49.4 Cicero's severed limbs retain symbolic importance because they once belonged to him. Plutarch highlights that Cicero faced his death steadfastly, but claims that Demosthenes' death was more honourable (*Cic.* 49.3 vs. *Comp. Cic. et Dem.* 5.1). Valerius Maximus blames Antony for Cicero's death: see Gowing 2005, 47. According to Plut. *Cic.* 46.2-3, Octavian first opposes Antonius and Lepidus who want to proscribe Cicero, before giving in. Vell. Pat. 2.66.2-5 equally accuses Antonius. Similarly in Mart. 3.66; 5.69: see Mindt 2014, 83.

²⁸⁹ Stadter 1972, 99 argues that we should trust the caption of *Per.* 121 (*qui editus post excessum Augusti dicitur*).

indiscriminately attacked him, as he could not respond. In this account, Cicero's death does not bring the Republic to an end but rather marks the endpoint of a pre-existing stylistic controversy, associating it with a certain time and place. Quintilian follows Cicero in dismissing the Atticists' championing of Lysias over Demosthenes as a misconception of what 'Attic' means (not an unadorned, but simply an excellent style, best represented by Demosthenes, is truly Attic).²⁹⁰ This reiteration of Cicero's argument is instrumental to his own presentation of Cicero as the foremost Latin author. Simultaneously, he historicises the debate by setting it into a defined timeframe (it occurred during Cicero's lifetime and peaked just after his death), thus relegating it to the past.²⁹¹ Indeed, he calls it an "ancient ... dispute" (12.10.16: *antiqua ... diuisio*). Other controversies have a much stronger presence in the *Institutio*. As we will see, Quintilian has contemporary stylistic fish to fry (§§4.2.1-3).²⁹²

Back to *Inst.* 12.1. After countering the reported criticism of Demosthenes' and Cicero's morality, Quintilian opts for a middle ground:

Ego tamen secundum communem loquendi consuetudinem saepe dixi dicamque perfectum oratorem esse Ciceronem, ut amicos et bonos uiros et prudentissimos dicimus uulgo, quorum nihil nisi perfecte sapienti datur: sed cum proprie et ad legem ipsam ueritatis loquendum erit, eum quaeram oratorem quem et ille quaerebat. (Inst. 12.1.19)

"I, however, following common linguistic usage, have often said and will keep saying that Cicero is the perfect orator, just as we colloquially say that friends are both good and outstandingly prudent men, titles otherwise given to nobody except the truly wise man. But when I will have to speak accurately and following the law itself of truth, I shall find missing the orator whom he also found missing."

He thus differentiates between an everyday and an emphatic sense of what it means to be perfect.²⁹³ He makes clear that neither of the two orators was. This recalls the differentiation made by Crassus at *De or.* 3.79, who opposes the "common orator" (*vulgaris orator*) to the one and only perfect one (*is solus orator*), and the search for the ideal orator in the *Orator* (*Orat.* 7-8). Quintilian thus operates with

²⁹⁰ *Inst.* 12.10.26: *Melius de hoc nomine sentiant, credantque Attice dicere esse optime dicere*. Cf. *Orat.* 23-24; 28-32 and *Brut.* 284-91, ending thus at 291: *Ita fiet ut non omnes, qui Attice, idem bene, sed ut omnes, qui bene, idem etiam Attice dicant*.

²⁹¹ This speaks against the argument of Döpp 1985, 11 that this discussion shows the controversy is ongoing. As Fairweather 1981, 56 writes, it is mentioned surprisingly rarely already by Seneca the Elder.

²⁹² See Adamik 1992, 126 on how the tripartition of genres is equally confined to this chapter (*Inst.* 12.10.58-65), which shows that Quintilian regards both issues as outdated.

²⁹³ Quintilian then refers to the Stoic practice of calling Zenon, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus great and venerable despite the fact that they did not reach wisdom, and mentions Pythagoras' refusal to be called wise (*Inst.* 12.1.18-19).

Cicero's rhetorical theory, but ignoring any implications in it that Cicero himself reached perfection.²⁹⁴ He supports his point through an evaluation of Cicero's style:

Quamquam enim stetisse ipsum in fastigio eloquentiae fateor, ac uix quid adici potuerit inuenio, fortasse inuenturus quid adhuc abscisurum putem fuisse (nam et fere sic docti iudicauerunt plurimum in eo uirtutum, nonnihil fuisse uitiorum, et se ipse multa ex illa iuuenili abundantia coercuisse testatur): tamen, quando nec sapientis sibi nomen minime sui contemptor adseruit et melius dicere certe data longiore uita et tempore ad componendum securiore potuisset, non maligne crediderim defuisse ei summam illam ad quam nemo propius accessit. (Inst. 12.1.20)

“Even though I admit that he stood at the very summit of eloquence, and barely find anything which could have been added, perhaps I would find something which I might think that he would still have cut away (for both did the learned mostly judge that he had many virtues, as well as a few vices, and he himself testifies that he had restrained much of that youthful abundance): anyway, since he did not claim for himself the name of a wise man – even if he did not at all despise himself – and since he surely could have spoken better had he been granted a longer life and safer times to write, I would not be malicious if I thought that he lacked that perfection to which nobody came closer.”

Cicero did not, for Quintilian, reach the perfection to which he is leading his potential pupils (note the echoing of 1 *pr.* 6: *ad summam*). The concessive start, as well as the adverb *fortasse* and the future formulation express polite cautiousness. Strikingly, Quintilian credits wise men (*docti*) with the judgement on Cicero's stylistic exuberance which he had earlier attributed to mean detractors (6.3.5: §2.2.2) and underpins it through Cicero's own remarks about his youthful, abundant style, which he progressively curbed (*Brut.* 316, *Orat.* 107), an exuberance attributed to young Sulpicius at *De or.* 2.88.²⁹⁵ Quintilian himself adopts the same position, but about the style of young children, rather than of young adults (*Inst.* 2.4.6). We have seen in §1.1.2 how he attributes a vampire-like effect to dry handbooks on rhetoric, draining the talent of potential pupils. Similarly, he warns: *Quapropter in primis euitandus, et in pueris praecipue, magister aridus, non minus quam teneris adhuc plantis siccum et sine*

²⁹⁴ See Classen 1965, 184. See Döpp 1986, 10 on the difference between Cicero's *De oratore*, where oratorical perfection appears as a difficult, but possible, goal, and *Orator*, where the perfect orator is set into a Platonic framework as an unachievable ideal. See Brinton 1983, 181 on Quintilian's *uir bonus* as a Platonic ideal, and on the tension between the conception of such an ideal and the claim that it could possibly be fulfilled by someone in the future. For Brinton, this means that Quintilian does not really hope for this ideal to be reached. See Sciarrino 2011, 161 on the progression sketched in the *Brutus*, with Cicero's character proposing that M. Antonius and L. Licinius Crassus reached perfection (*Brut.* 143) and Atticus' countering that Cicero himself did (*Brut.* 292-96).

²⁹⁵ See Abfahl 1932, 59 on the idea that children should be exuberant and progressively pruned. See Dyck 2010, 12 on the farming metaphor of the grape at *De or.* 2.88, and on Cicero's remark about his own young self at *Brut.* 316. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 6 adopts a similar strategy as Quintilian towards Cicero when criticising Plato, referring to Plato's own self-criticism.

umore ullo solum (2.4.8: “Because of this, one should foremost avoid a dry teacher, especially for small children, not less than soil that is dry and lacks any moisture for plants which are still small”).²⁹⁶ A dry teacher will dry up the pupils. Children are (and should be) naturally exuberant, and they like exuberant literature resembling their disposition. Regarding the earliest writing exercises, they are said to prefer poetry over prose maxims (1.1.36), and, as we will see (§4.1.3), they like corrupt ‘modernist’ writers, who are stylistically exuberant and borrow too much from poetry. As discussed above (§2.2.1), children should start reading Latin prose from Livy and Cicero. Steve Hays has argued that Quintilian, praising Livy for his “milky richness” (10.1.32: *lactea ubertas*), is not describing the style, but rather conveying that it is appropriate stylistic ‘nourishment’ for children.²⁹⁷ Similarly, Cicero’s *ubertas* (10.1.109), while describing his style, which is generally characterized as exuberant, may perhaps also imply that he makes for appropriate reading for the young. Indeed, the two things are connected: children are exuberant and like exuberant writing; Cicero himself is youthfully exuberant because he did not prune his style as much as he could have, and this may be part of the reason why they should study him first.

Furthermore, this evaluation of Cicero’s style in the last book of the *Institutio* recalls Cicero’s own reflection on Hortensius’ late career towards the end of the *Brutus*. Cicero writes that Hortensius eventually stopped training and developing his style, still using elements of Asianic style in his late years. This was incongruous, for “they are more appropriate for youths, but lack gravity in the old” (*Brut.* 326: *aptiora sunt adolescentibus, in senibus gravitatem non habent*). Quintilian may be tailoring Cicero’s evaluation of Hortensius onto Cicero himself. That the *Brutus* may be an intertext here is also suggested by his stance that Cicero did not refine his style sufficiently because oratory needs peace to develop its full potential, which recalls *Brut.* 22-23.²⁹⁸ Quintilian’s position is thus the opposite to that of Maternus at Tac. *Dial.* 36-49 that unsteady historical periods spur on rhetorical genius.²⁹⁹ Turmoil hinders rhetorical excellence, and Cicero could have written more and better, had he lived in calmer times (and improved himself further, as Hortensius also failed to do). He could have restrained his style, as well as his jokes and self-praise; the remark that “he did not at all despise himself” seems a not-so-subtle hint at his *iactatio*.

That Cicero was not yet the ideal orator emerges also from Quintilian’s views on literary progress, formulated most prominently in the very last chapter of the work:

²⁹⁶ See on Quintilian’s warning against a dry teacher drying up the pupils at *Inst.* 2.4.9, and on the reference to the description of Sulpicius’ talent at *De or.* 2.88, Fantham 1972, 145 and Whitton 2014, 224-25. Seneca takes a rather different stance at *Ep.* 37.4; however, we find the same pairing of *aridus* and *ieiunus* at Sen. *Ep.* 76.3 about philosophical style: *Non mehercules ieiuna esse et arida volo quae de rebus tam magnis dicentur*.

²⁹⁷ Hays 1986, 109.

²⁹⁸ See Gowing 2000, 49 on this. Compare Cic. *De or.* 1.14; 1.30, and Ovid’s complaints about not being able to write in exile, e.g. in *Tr.* 1.1.47-48; 1.11.33-38.

²⁹⁹ Goldberg 1999, 224; 229 stresses how in Tacitus’ *Dialogus* the decline of eloquence is announced as the topic, but is not endorsed by the authorial voice, and argues that Maternus’ repudiation of modern eloquence should not be attributed to Tacitus. Russell 2001, vol. 5, 206 notes that Quintilian implicitly rejects this notion. See also Petersen 2018, 203-4 on Maternus’ position.

Tot nos praeceptoribus, tot exemplis instruxit antiquitas, ut possit uideri nulla sorte nascendi aetas felicior quam nostra, cui docendae priores elaborarunt. (Inst. 12.11.22)

“With so many teachers, with so many examples did old times provide us, that one could think that there is no age at which it is luckier to happen to be born, for the education of which earlier men toiled.”

‘Now’ is the best possible moment to strive for perfection. A didactic function, or even intent, is attributed to all extant texts. Quintilian enrolls them as an army of subsidiary ‘teachers’ to help him.³⁰⁰ The *Institutio*, a work of didactic prose, appears as not inferior to other literary genres, but simply as carrying out a shared didactic purpose more directly. More importantly, this means that Quintilian has chosen the right time to present to the world his grand didactic project. He supports the teleological conception of literary development he proposes through the comparison of four authors, Cato the Elder, Varro, Cicero and Cornelius Celsus (12.11.23-24): Cato possessed a great range of intellectual faculties but wrote *rudī saeculo*.³⁰¹ The importance of this specification emerges from what follows. After pointing to the great learnedness of Varro and the oratorical proficiency of Cicero, Quintilian dwells longer on Celsus: he was a man of mediocre talent, but, drawing on all the learning which had become available, achieved greater results than Cato, Cicero and Varro together.³⁰²

Celsus stands as an encouraging *exemplum* for the student of rhetoric: thanks to the very nature of literary development, even a moderately gifted but diligent student will surpass earlier generations. Quintilian adds that just because something has not yet been achieved, this does not mean that it will not be in the future, and that it is also good to achieve second or third place (12.11.26).³⁰³ These paragraphs can be read as an attempt to assuage potential doubts about the feasibility of his didactic project: it is not impossible to reach perfection, and even if it were, hard work can yield good results. The same idea of progress already appears at the beginning and at the end of the theoretical discussion

³⁰⁰ Compare also *Inst.* 10.2.28, on which Van den Berg 2014, 266. A similar remark about earlier theoretical writings facilitating work is made at *Inst.* 5.10.121. Compare on the didactic intent of poets *Inst.* 12.4.2. This idea recalls the stance at *Sen. Ep.* 64.7 that the earlier writings are like a heritage one can profit from.

³⁰¹ See *Livy* 39.40.4-5 and *Cic. Brut.* 294 on Cato’s many talents. *Columella, Rust.* 1.1.12 pays tribute to Cato as the first Latin writer on agriculture. See also *De or.* 3.135 on Cato’s juridical and rhetorical expertise. As Austin 1948, 229 remarks, Quintilian like Cicero regards Cato as typical of the genuine old Roman *gravitas*. Compare *Suet. Gramm.* 1.1 on grammatical studies starting to develop in Rome at a time that was still primitive. See Kaster 1995, xliii on this implying the view that Rome did not emerge from a state of “pristine virtue”, but one that was *rudis*. Compare *Inst.* 2.5.41-42 on the start of rhetorical training at Rome.

³⁰² Varro is called *uir Romanorum eruditissimus* at *Inst.* 10.1.95 (with the addition *plus tamen scientiae conlaturus quam eloquentiae*), but see also 1.6.37 on his excess in analogism: *Sed cui non post Varronem sit uenia?* Compare *Ov. Ars. am.* 2.377-78; 3.113; 3.127-28 on earlier roughness vs. modern refinement.

³⁰³ See Fantham 1978a, 114 on Quintilian’s oscillation between the idealism of surpassing everyone and the more realistic goal of matching past achievements. Compare the view on literary progress at *Hor. Sat.* 1.10.51-71.

of *imitatio* (*Inst.* 10.2.4-9; 10.2.28): literature must, inevitably, improve over time.³⁰⁴ Quintilian does not subscribe to the notion of decline of eloquence since the start of the Principate.³⁰⁵ Instead, he encourages pupils to strive for perfection, and posits his times as the ideal moment to reach it. He omits the names of living contemporaries (with the exception of those of Trypho, Marcellus Vitorius and Geta, and Domitian), but expresses anonymised praise.³⁰⁶ Writing about Latin historiographers, he remarks that there is a contemporary writer deserving future memory (10.1.104), and similarly states that there are many great talents speaking in the forum, who will be celebrated by later authors (10.1.122).³⁰⁷ As Christopher Whitton writes, this statement follows upon the praise of recently deceased orators (*Inst.* 10.1.118-21: Domitius Afer, Julius Africanus, Trachalus, Vibius Crispus and Julius Secundus), and may include Pliny the Younger – and Quintilian himself.³⁰⁸

I have discussed how Quintilian pays homage to, and even canonizes, Cicero by setting him on a par with Homer, Vergil, and Demosthenes, not least by presenting him as the first Latin orator in the overview of authors. This, however, also shows the difference between the temporal framework Quintilian and Cicero operate in. Cicero had dubbed Cato the oldest Latin orator worth reading (*Brut.* 61) and had ended the *Brutus* with an account of his own career.³⁰⁹ Quintilian, while co-opting Cato's authority for his project by defining the ideal orator as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus*, does not recommend his works for reading, and repeatedly remarks on the outdatedness of his Latin (§4.1.2). He starts his account of Latin oratory with Cicero and ends it with near contemporaries, expressing high hopes for contemporary and future oratory.³¹⁰ This means that Quintilian canonizes Cicero, presenting him as the true founder of Latin oratory, but that Cicero does not figure as the culmination of Latin literature.³¹¹ He

³⁰⁴ As Baier 2017, 60 writes, *imitatio* is the key concept in Quintilian's account of the development of literature and culture generally. See also Möller 2003, 253. I would disagree with Gerbrandy 2020, 41, for whom the *Institutio* is a "tragic" work insofar as Quintilian shows himself aware that the goal is impossible to reach.

³⁰⁵ Quintilian's position also differs from that expressed at Vell. Pat. 1.17.4-8 that while *aemulatio* is the driving force behind literary development, in any art, once perfection is reached, later generations cannot surpass it and shift to other endeavours; Velleius identifies the period between Cicero's consulate and Augustan times as the blooming in various genres (2.36.1-3). See Nauta 2007, 5 on this idea of genres flourishing at different times.

³⁰⁶ Compare on the difficulties posed by writing about living contemporaries Vell. Pat. 2.36.3. As Balbo 2017, 89 writes, we do not know much about Flavian oratory, but are informed of a number of speeches (*Inst.* 4.1.1; 9.2.73, Plin. *Ep.* 1.18; 1.5; 6.29; 7.33, Suet. *Vesp.* 13).

³⁰⁷ See Van den Berg 2014, 244-45 on echoes of this passage at the start of Tacitus' *Dialogus*.

³⁰⁸ See Whitton 2019, 327-28 on this passage and echoes of it at Plin. *Ep.* 6.11.1. Also for Gibson 2020, 87, Pliny the Younger must be included in Quintilian's praise.

³⁰⁹ Giving only a marginal place to Ennius, Quintilian takes a stance akin to Martial's (*Ep.* 5.10.14) and Statius' (*Silv.* 2.7.75): Citroni 2006, 14. Compare also Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.76-89: Horace rejects the idea that old poetry is necessarily good. Raschieri 2018, 92 ends his discussion of Quintilian's citations of Republican orators by concluding that they prove that, for him, they belong firmly to the canon of authors the orator must know. One should however consider that they are not included in the overview.

³¹⁰ He takes an analogous approach to poetry: he does not leave out Ennius but compares him to a grove which is sacred because of its age (*Inst.* 10.1.88).

³¹¹ As Van den Berg 2014, 246 writes, Quintilian, for all his praise of Cicero, claims cultural continuity: oratory did not just stop after him.

was not the ideal orator, who may exist in the future, thanks to the *Institutio*.³¹² Quintilian's idea of literary progress, and his rejection of the idea that Cicero reached perfection, are connected and important for the credibility of his didactic endeavour: it would be equally idle if the ideal orator had already existed, or if he could not possibly exist.³¹³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Quintilian, in his reception of Cicero, balances between the acknowledgement of his excellence and moderate criticism regarding both his rhetorical theory and practice, and that this balancing act is key for Quintilian's self-representation and the didactic conception of the *Institutio*.

Cicero's writings on rhetoric are a main theoretical model for Quintilian. By praising them, he adds authority to his own positions that he backs by referring to them. At the same time, he signals his intellectual independence, distancing himself from Cicero's treatment of single points of rhetorical theory, claiming to surpass him on the grounds of his own more thorough and methodical approach, which he presents as more inherently 'didactic' insofar as it purports to teach those who lack knowledge, rather than entertaining the educated (§2.1.1). Greater coherence is a main point regarding which he contrasts the *Institutio* as a whole with Cicero's rhetorical writings: it stands as a comprehensive, monolithic unity, whereas Cicero's writings are beautiful, but contradictory (§2.1.2). Quintilian's approach may be said to be paricidal, or Bloomian, insofar as he implicitly, but firmly, positions Cicero's writings among those rhetorical treatises that he sets out to evaluate (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 1) and to make superfluous through his new, coherent, and 'definitive' treatise on rhetorical theory.

Cicero is also presented as the undisputed best Latin orator and author generally. He is 'canonized' through the normative role he is given within the educational process: together with Homer, Vergil, and Demosthenes, he forms the standard for the pupils' literary judgement. Again, one could say that Quintilian's praise is self-serving insofar as it justifies his pervasive use of Ciceronian citations to underscore his rhetorical teachings (§2.2.1). At the same time, Quintilian ventures to criticise certain elements of Cicero's rhetorical practice and, implicitly, of his character (§2.2.2). This prepares the ground for his conception of literary history as a progressive trajectory, and his explicit denial that Cicero reached perfection (§2.2.3). This is crucial for the conception of the *Institutio*: if it were

³¹² Quintilian does not adopt the idea of rhetorical decay due to political circumstances implied at *Brut.* 45, unlike the figure of Maternus at Tac. *Dial.* 40.2: see Döpp 1985, 16; 21. Rather, especially here and at *Inst.* 9.4.5; 10.2.7, he argues for the inevitability of progress: see Austin 1948, 231.

³¹³ I agree with Citroni 2017, 43-44, who dismisses the position e.g. of Calcante 2007, 121 that Quintilian regards Cicero as a model of perfection, followed only by decadence; as he points out, the work ends with a reference to the fact that there is room for improvement (*Inst.* 12.11.26). As Adamietz 1986, 2234-35 writes, Quintilian does not propose a radical classicism, unlike Messalla at Tac. *Dial.* 26.2f. See Terrill 2016, 162 on Quintilian's stance that no one single author should be imitated, not even Cicero.

impossible to educate the ideal orator, or if such an orator had existed already, the didactic conception of the work would be undermined.

Cicero famously has a stronger presence in the *Institutio* than any other figure. Overall, I hope to have shown that Quintilian acknowledges, and indeed promotes and profits from, the authority of this overbearing model, but also asserts his own authority as a writer and creates a space for his own, post-Ciceronian didactic endeavour. I have also suggested that Quintilian echoes Seneca in his formulation of the idea that a man's speech reflects his morals (§2.2.2), and in chapter four I will argue for a strong, if polemical, reception of Seneca in the *Institutio*.

In the next chapter, I will turn to Quintilian's professed didactic goal, the education of the ideal orator. We will see how in this respect as well, he oscillates between acknowledging Cicero's influence, and tacitly presenting a conception which differs from that of his model in meaningful ways.

CHAPTER THREE

3 The Ideal Orator. Didactic Goal and Literary Construct

Introduction

Quintilian's grand goal, his "explicit didactic intent", is to educate the ideal orator.³¹⁴ At *Inst.* 1 *pr.* 22, he announces that in the last book, the ideal orator himself "must be formed" (*informandus est*).³¹⁵ The lexical duplicity of *informo* hints at two distinct, if connected, layers of his project: he encourages potential pupils to strive to become the ideal orator following the training he proposes, and presents a picture of the ideal orator as a template.³¹⁶ The ideal orator is both the didactic goal and a literary construct. At *Inst.* 12.1.1, he is defined thus: *Sit ergo nobis orator quem constituimus is qui a M. Catone finitur uir bonus dicendi peritus* (12.1.1: "So let the orator whom we create be, for us, the one who is defined by M. Cato as the good man skilled in speaking").³¹⁷ I have already pointed to some 'proleptic' strategies adopted in the *Institutio* to soften the tension between the ambitiousness of this ideal and the didactic layout of the work (§1.2.1, 2.2.2). The conception and depiction of the ideal orator raises a new set of questions. What models does Quintilian point to? To what extent does he follow them? How does he draw the ideal orator? Does this picture reflect the political circumstances under which the *Institutio* was written?

I will first turn to the question of Quintilian's models. As seen in the last chapter, while acknowledging Cicero as his main model for rhetorical theory and practice, he strives to assert his independence as a writer, and denies that Cicero reached perfection. A similar dynamic can be seen regarding his conception of the ideal orator. He programmatically points to Cicero as his source of inspiration but differs from him in significant ways; central elements of his conception of the orator and oratory betray an influence of Stoic thought absent from Cicero (§3.1.1). Furthermore, he differs from Cicero by excluding philosophers from the educational equation, claiming the domain of philosophy for the orator. Making use of Stoic notions in the *Institutio*, he may be said to perform the appropriation he requests. As scholars have shown, he portrays philosophers negatively to justify his position, claiming that they 'merely talk', while orators 'act'. I will suggest on the one hand that this pointed opposition of 'actions' and 'words' may be an imitation and polemical overturning of Seneca the Younger's stance, who in his *Letters* claims that philosophers 'act', orators and grammarians 'merely talk'. On the other hand, I propose that Quintilian's devaluation of philosophers, and of other didactic figures he depicts similarly, is relevant not only for his portrayal of the orator, but also of himself. As

³¹⁴ Volk 2002, 37-39.

³¹⁵ *Informandus* can mean both 'educate' and 'draw', 'present'. Cicero uses a gerundive of *informo* twice: at *Orat.* 33, he is imagining the perfect orator as one who is educated in that sort of eloquence which Antonius did not find in anyone (*De or.* 1.94). At *Orat.* 75, he is announcing his depiction of what some call the Atticist style.

³¹⁶ OLD *informo* 2 ("give an outline or plan of, sketch") and 4 ("to mould ... by instruction").

³¹⁷ See on the positive valence, denoting particularly political engagement, of *uir* (as opposed to *homo*) in Cicero's usage Santoro L'Hoir 1992, 12-15.

seen in the last chapter, his didactic approach is a key point on which he claims to surpass Cicero and other writers. Cicero, however, speaks in a depreciating way about professional teachers of rhetoric. By aligning his teaching with rhetorical practice, and philosophers with bad teaching, Quintilian deflects this criticism, obviating the impression that he belongs to the group mocked by Cicero (§3.1.2). Then, I will address the conspicuous absence of prominent Stoic figures who opposed imperial power, which is functional to the representation of philosophers as apolitical and socially irrelevant (§3.1.3).

The devaluation of ‘mere speaking’ is key to the depiction of the orator and to Quintilian’s self-representation, but raises a question: how can he belittle speech in a work on rhetoric, but maintain the relevance of the orator’s activity and thus of his own work? The answer lies in the representation of the orator. In book 12, he is characterised as a man of ‘action’. Quintilian emphasises that rhetorical training and general knowledge are relevant foremost because they serve a practical goal, forensic victory, likening the orator’s activity to that of a military man.³¹⁸ This conveys the impression that he is ‘acting’, rather than merely ‘speaking’ (§3.2.1). This portrayal of the orator as someone who is “doing things with words” is supported by metaphors of masculinity and fight describing his style, as well as his activity.³¹⁹ This overlap supports the notion of the correspondence between a man’s style and his character (§3.2.2). Finally, I will address the question how Quintilian, who insists that his orator be a good man, deals with the more violent sides of forensic action and the activity of *delatores*, portrayed negatively by near-contemporary sources (§3.2.3).

Overall, we will see that, while Quintilian broadcasts his indebtedness to Cicero for his conception of the ideal orator, there are substantial differences. These can be ascribed to additional models, changed political and cultural circumstances, and to the tension, peculiar to the *Institutio*, between the ideal goal and the authorial persona’s claim to a down-to-earth, practical didactic approach.

3.1 The Ideal Orator, Philosophy and Philosophers

3.1.1 Platonic-Ciceronian Precedent and Stoic Traces

Just before introducing his Catonian definition of the ideal orator, Quintilian famously states his *aemulatio* of Cicero by showing himself and his model in a nautical allegory:

Nunc ‘caelum undique et undique pontus’. Vnum modo in illa immensa uastitate cernere uidemur M. Tullium, qui tamen ipse, quamuis tanta atque ita instructa naue hoc mare ingressus, contrahit uela inhihetque remos et de ipso demum genere dicendi quo sit usurus perfectus orator satis habet dicere. At nostra temeritas etiam mores ei conabitur dare et adsignabit officia. Ita nec antecedentem consequi possumus et longius eundem est ut res feret. Probabilis

³¹⁸ ABfahl 1932, 84-100 discusses military imagery in the *Institutio*. For Whitton 2019, 11, Pliny the Younger presents himself as “an ideal Quintilianic orator”.

³¹⁹ See on this overlap in Quintilian and in Seneca Möller 2003, 255.

tamen cupiditas honestorum, et uelut tutioris audentiae est temptare quibus paratior uenia est.
(*Inst.* 12 *pr.* 4)

“Now ‘sky is everywhere, and everywhere is sea’. Alone in that boundless expanse we seem to see Cicero, but even he, even if he entered this sea with such a great and well-built ship, folds the sails and draws in the oars and, finally, deems it enough to speak about the kind of speech that the perfect orator will use. But my temerity will also try to give morals to him and will assign duties to him. Thus, I cannot just follow my predecessor, and must go further as the subject matter will lead me. However, an eagerness for good things is laudable, and it pertains, so to say, to a rather safe kind of boldness to try things readily forgiven.”

The citation of Verg. *Aen.* 3.193 (*caelum undique et undique pontus*) introducing the sailing allegory is aptly chosen. In its original context, it initiates (within Aeneas’ narration to Dido) his departure from Crete after the *Penates* revealed to him that Italy is the ancestral land he must find. Renewing the voyage, Aeneas is leaving behind the track which turned out to be misleading and is finally steering towards Italy. It is a pivotal moment in the epic.³²⁰ Citing this passage, Quintilian signals that he, too, in his didactic journey is approaching his goal of depicting, and educating, the ideal orator. He appears almost as an epic hero, embarking on the last but most arduous part of his endeavour. Seafaring imagery earlier conveyed the change of gears in *peroratio* (*Inst.* 6.1.51-52): once again, Quintilian creates a parallel between his writing and the orator’s activity. Furthermore, he amplifies the path imagery of 1 *pr.* 3, which he had employed to show that he had surpassed anonymous earlier writers by integrating basic teaching into his work. As Christopher Whitton has shown, there are various echoes here of the *Preface* to book 1 and of the *Letter to Trypho*, which signal the coherence of the *Institutio* as a whole.³²¹ The grander imagery mirrors the bolder message, a difference in intensity which reflects the recommendation that emotions should be aroused with restraint in the prologue, with full strength in the epilogue (4.1.28).³²² Not primary education, but the conception of the ideal orator, is at stake. Cicero, despite the stateliness of his ship, folds his sails and yields to conditions. This is the most spectacular assertion of *aemulatio* in the *Institutio*.

The anachronistic contest with the dead Cicero seems like a daring but friendly, perhaps even slightly funny competition (two men all alone in the middle of the sea, on huge ships?). Cicero just quietly retreats, the race is not violent like the one held, in the *Aeneid*, in Anchises’ honour. There is no intergenerational conflict as in hot-headed young Gyas’ expulsion of his cautious old steersman Menoetes from the ship (Verg. *Aen.* 5.172-80), nor does the overtaken ship crash against the rocks like

³²⁰ Heyworth and Morwood 2017, 135 comment that the chiasmic order symbolizes the surrounding of the fleet by sky and sea.

³²¹ Whitton 2019, 492.

³²² For Quintilian, the preface is mainly concerned with *ethos*, the display of the orator’s character, which differs from *pathos* mainly in degree (*Inst.* 6.2.8-13): see Gill 1984, 159 and Bons and Lane 2003, 139.

Sergestus' (*Aen.* 5.202-4). Quintilian's persona is that of a judicious old man, and this race develops quietly. Through the oxymoron *tutioris audentiae*, softened by *uelut* as advised for bold figures, he strikes a balance between claiming unprecedented novelty for himself and not appearing arrogant.³²³ He poses, so to say, a cautiously strong claim for originality.³²⁴ And the rivalry is a productive one: Cicero's work is not obliterated, just surpassed. Quintilian also tones down the boldness of his claims by stressing that it is not a desire for personal fame, but the subject itself that spurs him on; he is not motivated by an "intense desire for praise" (*Aen.* 5.138: *laudumque arrecta cupido*). However, due to Cicero's own endeavour to draw the ideal orator, Quintilian's claim has struck scholars as bold.³²⁵ In the last chapter, we have seen how, while acknowledging Cicero's importance as a model, he strives to assert his independence. We will see the same dynamic in his conception of the ideal orator: he programmatically broadcasts his emulation of Cicero but differs from him on key points. He first states this emulation in connection with his request of a general education for the pupil, to which he devotes three chapters, starting thus (1.10-12: §1.2.1):

Nunc de ceteris artibus quibus instituendos priusquam rhetori tradantur pueros existimo strictim subiungam, ut efficiatur orbis ille doctrinae, quem Graeci encyclion paedian uocant.
(*Inst.* 1.10.1)

"Now I will summarily add something about the other arts in which I think children should be educated before being sent to the *rhetor*, so that the 'circle' of learning may be achieved which the Greeks call *enkyklios paideia*."

Having announced this request, Quintilian reports the scepticism of imagined interlocutors: since the single subjects of this general education are unrelated to rhetoric and are not alone sufficient to form the orator, they ask whether they are necessary for this endeavour at all (1.10.2).³²⁶ He relates more such questions about the relevance of being trained in geometry and music, and continues:

³²³ Leidl 2003, 38-39 argues that such an insertion does not have to change the ontological status of the metaphor. Quintilian suggests various junctures, including this one, to soften neologisms and bold metaphors, at *Inst.* 8.3.72. Compare Cic. *De or.* 3.165. See Innes 1988, 32 on the Peripatetic origin of the advice to soften bold metaphors, ascribed by [Longinus], *Subl.* 32.3 to Aristotle and Theophrastus.

³²⁴ For McDermott and Orentzel 1979, 19, this passage is a "sad commentary on the distraught weariness of the aging rhetor", which does not take into account that modesty is a key element of Quintilian's persona.

³²⁵ For Ryan 1929, 176, Quintilian adds to Cicero's concept of a 'good man' the ability to 'speak well', which seems surprising. See Cousin 1967, 15 on the similarity of Quintilian's project to Cicero's. See Fögen 2009, 113 on how Quintilian's and Cicero's projects are resembled by Vitruvius' request for a broad education of the architect (*Arch.* 1.1.7).

³²⁶ See the request for the orator's broad knowledge at Cic. *De or.* 1.17-18. For Kühnert 1979, 166, Quintilian's request of a general education is superfluous because it was already established by his time. As Beagon 1992, 12 writes, Plin. *HN pr.* 13 also alludes to the notion of *enkyklios paideia* to denote a preliminary education, and Quintilian shares the broadness of scope and Roman practicality characteristic of Pliny's *HN*. See on *enkyklios paideia* Fernández López 2010, 311. Bloomer 2015, 350 attributes Quintilian's encyclopaedic tendency partly to

Enumerent etiam fortasse multos quamlibet utiles foro qui neque geometren audierint nec musicos nisi hac communi uoluptate aurium intellegant. Quibus ego primum hoc respondeo, quod M. Cicero scripto ad Brutum libro frequentius testatur: non eum a nobis institui oratorem qui sit aut fuerit, sed imaginem quandam concepisse nos animo perfecti illius et nulla parte cessantis. (Inst. 1.10.4).

“They may perhaps also list many speakers who are as apt as you like for the forum, but who neither studied with a teacher of geometry nor would understand musicians except for the pleasure of listening we all share. To them, I first answer that which Cicero often states in his book dedicated to Brutus: that I do not educate an orator as he already exists or existed, but that I have formed, in my mind, a certain image of that [orator] who is perfect and lacking in no respect.”

In reference to Cic. *Orat.* 7-8, Quintilian sets his request for a general education as a direct consequence of his adoption of the mental picture of the perfect orator (*imago*), thus aligning his project with Cicero’s late dialogue.³²⁷ As scholars have shown, Cicero’s request, in the *Orator*, of broad knowledge for his ideal orator, already formulated in the *De oratore*, serves to counteract concerns, expressed in Plato’s dialogues, about rhetoricians lacking real knowledge.³²⁸ Claiming to follow the *Orator*, Quintilian pays homage to Cicero and ignores any implications that he reached perfection (compare §2.2.3). Furthermore, it is striking that he momentarily reflects the ductus of Cicero’s dialogues by presenting himself as engaging in a discussion with critics, a recurrent strategy (see §1.2.1). That these critics (allegedly) back their position by referring to ignorant contemporary speakers reveals their own lack of insight into the benefits of a broad education and undermines their authority.

Then, Quintilian shifts to the practical implementation of his request: he will lead pupils through smaller exercises. He compares his approach with that of the Stoics striving to educate the perfect wise man, who teach “little puzzles” (*keratinai*) “not because ... they alone can create the wise man, but because he must not be deceived even in the smallest details” (1.10.5: *non quia ... possint facere sapientem, sed quia illum ne in minimis oporteat falli*).³²⁹ Quintilian here points to a key domain in which he claims to surpass Cicero: his thorough, didactic approach (see §2.1.1-2). Instead of simply

Cicero’s influence, partly to his times. Albrecht 2012, 1067 calls his organisation of vast amounts of material a “typisch römische Leistung”.

³²⁷ OLD *imago* 6.

³²⁸ See Habinek 2004, 47, and Fantham 2004, 54 on Cicero’s attempt to reconcile the quarrel between philosophers and rhetoricians by arguing for “a new, Roman synthesis”.

³²⁹ Gell. *NA* 18.2.9 reports on this exercise. Similarly, Quintilian defends the orator’s ability to defend both sides of an issue by saying that it was an Academic, Carneades, who first did so before the Roman public (*Inst.* 12.1.35). Quintilian at points marks his own awareness of philosophical debates; for instance, he mentions Epicurus at 7.3.5, or notes that there are great treatises on justice at 7.8.7.

requesting that the adult orator should possess broad knowledge, he allocates a concrete moment within early training to its assimilation. In tune with this focus, he later reassures sceptical readers that it will not be too demanding to train children in different subjects simultaneously because no age is more resilient. He appeals to experience: *experimentis deprehendas* (1.12.8: “you may gather this from experience”). This is a strategy he often adopts to create authority (§2.1.1). Another didactic writer who uses it prominently is Ovid: *Vsus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito* (*Ars am.* 1.29: “Habit informs this work: obey the experienced bard”).³³⁰

This does not mean, Quintilian reassures readers, that his orator should become a musician or a geometrician, but that this knowledge will contribute to his perfection (*Inst.* 1.10.5). He illustrates this through two comparisons, one with medicine, composed of several ingredients, one with honey, that bees concoct from many flowers (1.10.6-7). Particularly the latter evokes the laboriousness of the process and the self-discipline it requires. The bees’ activity is famously depicted in Verg. *G.* 4.8-115.³³¹ As often, there is no unequivocal lexical correspondence between Quintilian’s passage and the possible intertext, but considering Vergil’s prominence in the *Institutio*, a hint is not impossible.³³² The impression that the *Georgics* may be somewhere in the background is reinforced by the subsequent mention of Orpheus (*Inst.* 1.10.9, together with Linus), whose story is told at *G.* 4.453-527.³³³

Plato is among various Greeks adduced to back the request for musical training: students will else not be able to understand some of his writings, especially the *Timaeus*. And further: *De philosophis loquor, quorum fons ipse Socrates iam senex institui lyra non erubescerebat?* (1.10.13: “Why do I even speak about the philosophers, whose fountainhead himself, Socrates, was not ashamed of being trained in lyre-playing when he was already old?”).³³⁴ This is a good example of how Quintilian sheds only partial light on a passage he cites, fitting it into his argument. Socrates’ statement at Pl. *Euthyd.* 272b7-c3 that he is taking kithara lessons in his old age is not a recommendation of musical training generally but backs his claim that he would not be ashamed to learn from the sophists Euthydemus and Dionysodoros, to whom he ironically proposes himself as a student. Quintilian conveniently ignores this argumentative context, since for him, such studies should be confined to early years; as already seen, he presents himself as aiming at the students’ independence, unlike other didactic figures, who want to keep them in school forever (see §§1.2.1; 3.1.3). He then returns to Plato: *Non igitur frustra Plato ciuili uiro, quem πολιτικόν uocat, necessariam musicen credidit* (1.10.15: “Therefore, Plato did not think in vain that music is necessary to the civil man, whom he calls *politikos*”). As we will see,

³³⁰ This contrasts Ovid (and Quintilian) with didactic poets such as Aratus and Nicander, whom Crassus at *De or.* 1.69 mentions as having had no real-life experience of their topics.

³³¹ See Feeney 2014, 190-93 on the history of this simile; Sen. *Ep.* 84.5 uses it for *imitatio*.

³³² Compare Damon 2010, 377-79 on the difficulties to identifying precise intertexts for potential allusions in Latin historiography.

³³³ Vergil describes the effect of Orpheus’ song on the underworld gods (*G.* 4.471-84); Ovid expands on the episode *inter alia* by imagining Orpheus’ words (*Met.* 10.17-39). Hor. *Ars P.* 391-94 presents Orpheus’ song as a civilizing force.

³³⁴ Socrates is similarly called *fons* at Cic. *De or.* 1.42. Seneca the Elder may perhaps be playing with this image of Socrates as the old pupil when remarking about himself: *mittatur senex in scholas* (*Controv.* 1 *pr.* 5).

“civic man” is a juncture Quintilian applies to his ideal orator from the very start of the work (1 *pr.* 10; §3.1.2). Attributing it to Plato, he co-opts him as an authority not only for his recommendation of music, but for his conceptualisation of the ideal orator generally.³³⁵

After music, Quintilian discusses the child’s training with the actor for voice and posture (1.11.1-14) and the appropriateness of training with “wrestling-teachers” (1.11.15-19: *palaestrici*).³³⁶ After addressing potential concerns about the programme outlined being too demanding (1.12.1-15),³³⁷ he again differentiates between his ambitious project and the concerns of a less idealistic public:

Difficultatis patrocinia praeteximus segnitiae; neque enim nobis operis amor est, nec quia sit honesta ac rerum pulcherrima eloquentia petitur ipsa, sed ad uilem usum et sordidum lucrum accingimur. Dicant sine his in foro multi et adquirent, dum sit locupletior aliquis sordidae mercis negotiator et plus uoci suae debeat praeco. Ne uelim quidem lectorem dari mihi quid studia referant computaturum. (Inst. 1.12.16-17)

“We put forward the excuse of difficulty for our idleness; for we do not love the work, nor is oratory striven for because it is honourable and the most beautiful thing of all, but we exert ourselves for lowly usefulness and filthy profit. Many may speak in the forum without this knowledge and make gains, so long as any dealer of squalid goods may be richer, and a crier owes more to his voice. I wouldn’t even want a reader to be given to me who will calculate how much money his studies will make him.”

The use of the first-person plural conveys the impression that a general contemporary tendency is sketched.³³⁸ In good didactic fashion, Quintilian claims control over his readership. Again, the start of Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* comes to mind: *Este procul, uittae tenues, insigne pudoris / quaeque tegis medios, instituta longa, pedes* (*Ars am.* 1.31-2: “Stay away, soft headbands, and you, long band which covers the feet in the middle, mark of pudor”).³³⁹ Furthermore, the evocation of a banausic public only interested in money recalls similar passages in near-contemporary literature. Trimalchio’s guest Echio, for instance, wants one of his sons to study law because it is profitable: *uolo illum ... aliquid de iure gustare. Habet haec res panem* (Petron. *Sat.* 46: “I want him to taste a bit of jurisprudence. That thing brings

³³⁵ Furthermore, Chiron and Achilles, a paradigmatic teacher-pupil pair, are credited with first introducing martial music (*Inst.* 1.10.30). Ov. *Ars am.* 1.11-12 refers to this relationship; see Val. Max. 8.8 (ext).2 on Achilles’ musical engagement. Achilles sings and plays the lyre at Hom. *Il.* 9.185-89.

³³⁶ At *Inst.* 1.11.18, Quintilian cites Crassus at Cic. *De or.* 3.220 on the orator’s movements being informed not by the stage and actors, but by military training and the *palaestra*. See Nocchi 2013, 138-39 on the novelty of Quintilian’s advice in Latin literature; she deems the *De oratore* passage too vague to count as a precedent.

³³⁷ Compare the remark at Cic. *De or.* 1.256, which however is not followed by concrete advice on early training.

³³⁸ Colson 1924, 152 writes that the poor child himself could hardly be accused of *segnitia*.

³³⁹ Taisne 1997, 38-40 compares this passage at length with Cic. *De or.* 1.202. See also *De off.* 1.150: *inliberales ... et sordidae quaestus mercenariorum omnium*.

bread”).³⁴⁰ The metaphor of tasting (Quintilian employs it for superficial learning at *Inst.* 12.2.3) matches the metonymical description of financial gain as bread, underlining the abjectness of the statement. One could also think of the advice given to a father at *Mart.* 5.56 to make not a poet or orator out of his son, but instead a singer, flute-player, crier, or architect if he will be rich, or the complaints about people becoming wealthy through lowly jobs at *Juv.* 3.30-40; 3.155-63. Quintilian uses a trope of invective to make the point that financial profit is not the goal of his educational project. Then, he clarifies what he expects from the ‘right’ kind of reader:

Qui uero imaginem ipsam eloquentiae diuina quadam mente conceperit quique illam, ut ait non ignobilis tragicus, ‘reginam rerum orationem’ ponet ante oculos fructumque non ex stipe aduocationum sed ex animo suo et contemplatione ac scientia petet perpetuum illum nec fortunae subiectum, facile persuadebit sibi ut tempora, quae spectaculis campo tesseris, otiosis denique sermonibus, ne dicam somno et conuiuiorum mora conteruntur, geometrae potius ac musico inpendat, quanto plus delectationis habiturus quam ex illis ineruditis uoluptatibus. (*Inst.* 1.12.18)

“But he – who has formed the image itself of eloquence through some divine inspiration and who, as a tragedian of some renown says, will set the ‘queen of things, speech’ before his eyes and will seek a reward not from the fees of advocacy, but from his own mind and contemplation and learning, one which is enduring and not subjected to fortune – will easily convince himself that he should devote the time that is wasted on spectacles, the Campus Martius, boardgames, finally on idle chatter, not to mention sleep and the duration of banquets, to the teacher of geometry and music, since he will draw much more enjoyment from these arts than from those uneducated pleasures.”

Again, we find the term *imago*: Cicero only employs it at *Orat.* 8 for his conception of the ideal orator, but Quintilian adopts it to advertise the tradition he is operating in.³⁴¹ Just as a good orator should do, Quintilian has ‘visualised’ the ideal orator before setting out to draw and educate him and expects this also from competent readers.³⁴² The tragedian in question is Pacuvius, originally quoted at *De or.* 2.187 by Antonius in his description of the orator’s qualities and the power of his speech over the audience: *flexanima* atque *omnium* regina rerum oratio (“speech, soul-bending and queen of all things”).³⁴³

³⁴⁰ OLD *gustare* 4.

³⁴¹ He uses it again at *Inst.* 2.20.4: *cuius imaginem animo concepimus*.

³⁴² Compare Ash 2018, 282 on how the statement that the dying Seneca wanted to convey “an image of his own life” (*Tac. Ann.* 15.62.1: *imaginem uitae suae*) to his friends triggers *enargeia*; also Ker 2009, 89. Quintilian often uses *imago* for the visualisation of something by orator or the public: see esp. *Inst.* 3.8.50; 4.2.123; 5.11.24; 6.1.19-40; 6.2.29; 8.6.63-77; 9.2.33-42; 10.7.14; 12.1.29.

³⁴³ Cf. Colson 1924, 153: the passage is assigned by Nonius to Pacuvius’ *Hermione*.

Antonius then compares the orator to “a strong and good general” (*imperator fortis ac bonus*), who overcomes even an armed adversary. Quintilian modifies the quotation. He sets it into the accusative and omits the adjectives *omnium* and *flexanima*, obliterating any implication of the violence and concrete usefulness of oratory. Again, this shows his carefulness in adapting citations to his argument: since he is pleading for an appreciation of rhetorical training beyond its everyday use, pointing to its persuasive power would be counterproductive.³⁴⁴

Quintilian follows Cicero in defusing Platonic criticism of oratory by requesting a broad education for the orator. This appears most clearly from *Inst.* 2.15. Quintilian poses the question “what rhetoric is” (2.15.1: *quid sit rhetorice*), first differentiating between those who think that bad men can also be orators, and those, with whom he agrees, who want to give this name only to good men (2.15.1. Compare 12.1.1-13; §2.2.3). He first turns to those separating rhetoric from virtues, reviewing various names they gave to it: a faculty, a science but not a virtue, a habit, an art but one which is separated from knowledge and virtue, or even a “bad art”, a *κακοτεχνία* (2.15.2). This group, he remarks, mostly thought that the gift of speaking lies either in persuading or in speaking persuasively, but that this can also be done by someone who is not a good man (2.15.3). The most common definition, he says, is “that rhetoric is ‘the power to persuade’” (2.15.3: *rhetorice esse ‘uim persuadendi’*).³⁴⁵ He adds that this opinion originates with Isocrates, if really the art circulating under his name is his – again, we see a preoccupation with the authenticity of writings. About Isocrates, he comments that even if he is far from those who want to defame the orator’s duties, he rashly summarised the goal of the art by saying that rhetoric is the “workman of persuasion” (2.15.4: *persuadendi opificem, πειθοῦς δημιουργόν*). Then, he denies that Plato ever thought rhetoric was a matter of mere persuasion and argues that careless reading of the *Gorgias* gave rise to this idea (2.15.24-32). Re-reading Plato in this way, he underplays the very beginnings of philosophical criticism of rhetoric.³⁴⁶

Just before formulating his own definition of rhetoric, he writes that Cicero “calls it a part of civil science” (*scientiae ciuilis partem uocat*) and “some, among whom is Isocrates, [call it] philosophy” (2.15.33: *quidam eandem philosophiam, quorum est Isocrates*).³⁴⁷ He then introduces his own definition: *Huic eius substantiae maxime conueniet finitio rhetorice esse bene dicendi scientiam* (2.15.34: “Most in accord with its substance will be the definition that rhetoric is the science of speaking

³⁴⁴ At *Inst.* 2.17.5, Quintilian counts Antonius’ character among those who think that rhetoric is merely natural, not artful. At 2.17.41, he claims that rhetoric is useful for living (*ad finem utilem uitae*): see Van den Berg 2014, 11 on Marcus Aper’s similar claim at *Dial.* 5.3-6. The danger of wasting time is again chided at *Inst.* 12.11.18-19. This recalls Pliny’s description of his uncle’s diligent daily routine in *Ep.* 3.5.

³⁴⁵ See Arist. *Rh.* 1355b25-26.

³⁴⁶ See on this passage Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 238. See also Classen 1965, 183 on Quintilian’s project as a reaction to Platonic criticism of rhetoric, and Fernández López 2010, 309 on this definition of oratory going beyond mere technical handbooks on rhetoric.

³⁴⁷ See Raschieri 2017, 302-4; 313-14 on the structure of *Inst.* 2.15 and on how Quintilian is distancing himself from a conception of oratory as the art of persuasion as expressed in Cic. *Inv.* 1.6 and taken up again in Cicero’s later works, so at *De or.* 1.44; 1.138; 2.115; 2.326, *Leg.* 1.62, *Top.* 74.

well”).³⁴⁸ This definition, as scholars have shown, plays on the double valence of *bene* as both technically and ethically good, and is of Stoic matrix.³⁴⁹ The same can be said about the definition of the ideal orator as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (12.1.1), which has prompted a long debate about whether Cato had been influenced by Stoicism when coining it, or whether it was retrospectively fitted into a Stoic conception.³⁵⁰ Thus, while programmatically claiming a Ciceronian-Platonic pedigree for his ideal orator, Quintilian tacitly adopts a Stoic definition of rhetoric and the ideal orator.³⁵¹ Another prominent trace of Stoicism in the *Institutio* is the criterion of nature. At 1 *pr.* 20, Quintilian reassures readers that reaching the ideal is not incompatible with human nature. Shortly after, he encourages fathers to devote as much care as possible to their new-born child’s education instead of worrying about lack of talent by claiming that intellectual activity is the defining characteristic of mankind, which is why the soul is thought to be divine (1.1.1). Untalented children are not the rule, but as much an exception as “monstrous bodies” (1.1.2: *prodigiosa corpora*).³⁵² Quintilian builds his argument similarly to Sen. *Ep.* 76. 8-11, contrasting man with various animals and concluding that what singles him out is his rationality (compare *Ep.* 41.8). There is, however, a significant difference: Seneca explicitly excludes “voice” (76.9: *uocem*) as man’s defining element, Quintilian in later passages highlights speech, rather than rationality:

³⁴⁸ At *Inst.* 2.17.23-24, Quintilian argues that rhetoric is an ability and that its quality does not depend on the outcome of a specific case: see on this Terrill 2016, 161.

³⁴⁹ OLD *bene* 2 (“correctly, clearly, well”) and 4b (“morally well”). At Cic. *De or.* 1.83, Antonius reports the definition of oratory by the Stoic Mnesarchus as the “art of speaking well” (*bene dicendi scientiam*) and as a “virtue” (*uirtutem*). At *De or.* 3.65, Crassus remarks that the Stoics define eloquence as a virtue and wisdom (*eloquentiam uirtutem ac sapientiam esse dixerunt*). See Habinek 2017, 295 on Crassus at *De or.* 3.37 seemingly presenting the Stoic principle that practicing an art, here eloquence, is an exercise of wisdom.

³⁵⁰ For Radermacher 1899, 291 and Cousin 1967, 12, Cato is influenced by Stoicism when coining the maxim. Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, xli-xlviii argue that Quintilian strategically adopts the Catonian maxim to make his Stoic conception of the orator palatable to a Roman public, and that the idea that Cato did not express an old-fashioned Roman concept, but Stoic dogma, is psychologically implausible. They suggest that the phrase was perceived as a genuine instance of old-fashioned Roman *uirtus*, and that it was Quintilian who connected Cato’s maxim with Stoicism, making it an emblem for a Stoicizing conception of rhetoric.

³⁵¹ Sihler 1920, 209 discusses several elements of Stoic matrix in Quintilian’s thought, among them the notions of innate moral judgement (*Inst.* 1.3.12; 12.20.6), of the ideal sage (1.10.5), of *providentia* (1.10.7) and of a *fabricator mundi* (2.16.19). Cf. Diog. Laert. 7.135-36; on the world’s creator, Cic. *ND* 1.39 on his rational power pervading the world. See Viano 1995, 202 on the link between such *generales quaestiones* like *an providentia mundus regatur* (cf. *Inst.* 12.2.1) and philosophical doxography. At 5.7.35-36, Quintilian remarks that there is a disagreement between Stoics and Epicureans on whether the world is steered by providence.

³⁵² See Cic. *ND* 2.29 or Diog. Laert. 7.138-39 on the correspondence between human intelligence and the ordering force of the cosmos. Compare the argument in Sen. *Ep.* 76.8-11 on *ratio* being the defining feature of man, as opposed to animals; Quintilian replaces *ratio* with the *dicendi facultas*. See also Cic. *De or.* 1.33 on speech distinguishing men from animals. See Fögen 2000, 36 on this trope. See Cousin 1967, 16 on the notion that human intellectual ability is proof of the heavenly origin of the soul and Cousin 1975, LXII generally on the importance Quintilian attributes to *natura*. See Fantham 1995, 126-27 on the Aristotelian (*Rh.* 1362b7) and Stoic origins of the notion that humans are inclined towards learning; Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 1, 19 adduces the start of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

Et hercule deus ille princeps, parens rerum fabricatorque mundi, nullo magis hominem separauit a ceteris, quae quidem mortalia essent, animalibus quam dicendi facultate. (Inst. 2.16.12)

“And, by Hercules, that highest god, father of things and creator of the world, separated man from all other, equally mortal, creatures through nothing more than through his ability to speak.”

Speech, rather than intellect, appears as the key marker of the human species. Quintilian here treats the question whether rhetoric is useful, basing his (unsurprisingly) affirmative answer on the rational layout of the cosmos: after outlining the defining characteristics of other animals, he states that the creator gave humans intellect and wanted them to share it with the gods (2.16.14), and adds that this divine rationality is expressed through speech (2.16.15). Speech being the means through which to express the divine spirit, cultivating it becomes of the utmost importance. He also invokes the heavenly origin of the soul to argue that oratory cannot be evil:

Rerum ipsa natura, in eo quod praecipue indulsisse homini uidetur quoque nos a ceteris animalibus separasse, non parens sed nouerca fuerit si facultatem dicendi sociam scelerum, aduersam innocentiae, hostem ueritatis inuenit. (Inst. 12.1.2)

“The nature of things itself, in that domain in which she seems to have indulged man most, and to have separated us from all other animals, would have been not a mother, but a stepmother, if she devised the faculty of speech as a companion to crimes, an adversary to innocence, an enemy of truth.”

Here it is just speech that is explicitly mentioned as man’s defining faculty. Near the very end of the work, Quintilian reiterates that speech is the best thing which mankind received from the gods: *ipsam ... orandi maiestatem, qua nihil dii immortales melius homini dederunt* (12.11.30: “the majesty of speaking itself; the gods gave nothing better to man than it”). Oratory is set into the frame of the Stoic cosmos, but Quintilian progressively shifts his focus onto speech.³⁵³ By teaching students how to speak (and think) well, he is helping them to reach nothing less than their natural determination. Any orator,

³⁵³ See Varwig 1976, 123-24. Compare *Inst.* 3.2.1 on the natural origin of oratory, 1.10.8 on human *natura* not making it impossible to reach the ideal. Isocrates sets good speaking as the summit of human endeavour, allowing communities to live harmoniously, and Cicero *De or.* 3.55 adopts the claim that *eloquentia* is the highest virtue: see Connolly 2009, 129; 134. Wagenvoort 1947, 107 argues that Quintilian at 12.11.30 (cf. also Tac. *Dial.* 4.4) uses vocabulary of worship to express reverence for the magic power of speech, a position criticised by Dumézil 1952, 13, in turn contested in Wagenvoort 1952, 48-49. Compare Sen. *Dial.* 7.8.2: *Idem est ergo beate vivere et secundum naturam*. See also Sen. *Dial.* 8.4.2; *Ep.* 31.9 on the path to wisdom being natural, safe, and pleasant; similarly, *Ep.* 66.39.

even if he is not the ideal orator, will approach it more closely, and thus be superior to everyone else – slaves, children, women, but also men lacking learning or engaging in other studies, like philosophers.³⁵⁴ As we will see in the next section, Quintilian explicitly argues for this superiority. One could say that he adopts a philosophical framework, only to turn it against philosophers, among others.

On a smaller scale, too, Quintilian employs the parameter of *natura* to conceptualise, defend, or attack specific elements of rhetorical theory and practice, presenting his own teacher and the oratory he proposes as ‘natural’.³⁵⁵ As for *natura* as natural talent, Quintilian from the *Preface* onwards (1 *pr.* 26) stresses that the student of rhetoric must combine natural talent with art and training. This concerns both speech and morality: like the ability to speak, *uirtus* originates in *natura* but must “nevertheless be perfected through learning, without which nobody can be either a good man or skilled in speaking” (12.2.1: *tamen perficienda doctrina est, sine qua nemo nec uir bonus esse nec dicendi peritus potest*). The importance attributed to training for moral improvement again recalls Seneca’s *Letters*.³⁵⁶ Quintilian discredits the position of those who think otherwise (12.2.2-4), and as we will see in §§4.2.2-3, he insistently criticises speakers relying only on talent, without art or training.³⁵⁷

We have seen that Quintilian claims a Platonic-Ciceronian precedent for his conception of the ideal orator, but that his conception of the orator and oratory is of a Stoic stamp. As Herrmann Raubenheimer put it, his approach to philosophy is characterised by “Eklektizismus” and “Popularphilosophie”: he employs some philosophical notions, assuming his readership’s acquaintance with general tenets rather than with specialist debates.³⁵⁸ As we will see in the next section, he claims that philosophy really belongs to orators and depicts contemporary philosophers negatively to support his claim. This constitutes another substantial difference from Cicero.

³⁵⁴ See Atherton 1998, 225 on the classical association of children with slaves and animals and thus with lack of speech and irrationality, and Morgan 1998, 260-61 on Quintilian naming children, slaves, women, and barbarians as one group who have little in common with each other besides being all individuals lacking political influence, and thus are inferior to the orator. Compare Sen. *Dial.* 2.12.1 on the wise man considering everyone else like adults consider children, and on bad people and children sharing a lack of control, which is then attributed to women at 2.14.1. Ov. *Ars am.* 1.269-350 comes to mind regarding the latter point.

³⁵⁵ See Pellicer 1966, 441-42 generally on the criterion of nature in rhetorical writings, Varwig 1976, 115-22 on the Stoic background of Quintilian’s conception of *natura*, and on his use of this category to underpin his teachings. For instance, *dispositio* and the rational ordering of the cosmos are linked (*Inst.* 7 *pr.* 3). Throughout the book, *natura* is set as the criterion to be followed, which shows the difficulty to convey clear-cut teachings on a topic that is said to depend mostly on experience: cf. *Inst.* 7.1.40; 7.1.46; 7.1.64; 7.2.15; 7.2.39; 7.9.15. Cf. also on *ornatus* 8.3.71. At 9.1.19, Quintilian advertises his procedure as following *natura*.

³⁵⁶ Austin 1948, 73 points to Sen. *Ep.* 108.8 and Cic. *Fin.* 5.43 as parallel passages on the importance of moral training; see Raubenheimer 1911, 38 for further discussion. See on Seneca’s insistence on the importance of *exercitatio* Edwards 2019, 19 (who points to *Ep.* 71.31; 78.16; 84.47; 90.46; 94.3), as well as on the collaborative nature of the quest for self-improvement envisaged in the *Letters* (*Ep.* 6.5; 84.11).

³⁵⁷ As Holcomb 2001, 56; 60 writes, Quintilian highlights that rules are expedient but nevertheless “imperfect guides to actual practice”, and that the orator will acquire capacity of adaptability after long study and continuous practice (10.7.8). Compare Hömke 2002, 47.

³⁵⁸ Raubenheimer 1911, 8.

3.1.2 ‘Re’-Claiming Philosophy for the Orator

Quintilian refers to, and employs, philosophical notions for his conception of the ideal orator. At the same time, he depicts contemporary philosophers negatively and claims their domain for orators.

When first announcing his goal of educating the ideal orator, he differentiates his project from mere technical handbooks (*Inst.* 1 *pr.* 9; see §1.1.2). But then, he takes pains to differentiate it from contemporary philosophy. Philosophy was really ‘the better part’ of oratory which was stolen by philosophers and must be claimed back. The *uir ille uere ciuilis* (“that truly civic man”), who can lead the state well, is the orator (1 *pr.* 10). *Vere* implies that (contemporary) philosophers may create only an apparently civic man. However, the juncture is, as seen above, later employed in connection with Plato, which shows the duplicity of Quintilian’s approach.³⁵⁹ He announces that he will draw on philosophical works (which, as seen above, he does), but claim that they pertain to oratory (1 *pr.* 11). He adds a question: since issues about justice, braveness, moderation, and similar topics constantly appear in cases debated by orators and must be explained with the help of invention and elocution, can one doubt that it is the orator who is needed wherever “intellectual power and fullness of speech” (1 *pr.* 12: *uis ingenii et copia dicendi*) are required?

Quintilian backs his up his point by giving an account of the original union and subsequent separation of rhetoric and philosophy. He refers to Cicero’s authority, without mentioning that he presented two versions of the story. At Cic. *Inv.* 1.3-4, the separation is said to have happened because low-minded, but superficially eloquent men took over state affairs, at *De or.* 3.56-63, because high-minded men from Socrates onwards turned to philosophy and avoided studying eloquence and engaging with daily business.³⁶⁰ Quintilian starts by saying that Cicero very clearly shows that once upon a time, the two disciplines were joined, but then split up. He continues:

*Nam ut primum lingua esse coepit in quaestu institutumque eloquentiae bonis male uti, curam morum qui disertis habebantur reliquerunt: ea uero destituta infirmioribus ingeniis uelut praedae fuit. Inde quidam contempto bene dicendi labore ad formandos animos statuendasque uitae leges regressi partem quidem potiore, si diuidi posset, retinuerunt, nomen tamen sibi insolentissimum adrogauerunt, ut soli studiosi sapientiae uocarentur; quod neque summi imperatores neque in consiliis rerum maximarum ac totius administratione rei publicae clarissime uersati sibi umquam uindicare sunt ausi: facere enim optima quam promittere maluerunt. (Inst. 1 *pr.* 13-14)*

³⁵⁹ Compare *Inst.* 11.1.35 (*At uir ciuilis uereque sapiens*); 12.2.7 (*uere ciuilem uirum*); 12.2.21 (*futurus est uir ciuilis*). See Habinek 2004, 61 on Quintilian’s normative ideal of a *Romanus sapiens*, who will combine Greek wisdom with Roman practicality and statesmanship.

³⁶⁰ Compare the parallel claim in Celsus, *Med.* 1 *pr.* 8 that Hippocrates was the first one to separate medicine from the general pursuit of wisdom.

“For once speech started being involved in the pursuit of wealth, and people started to use the goods of eloquence badly, those who were regarded as learned left behind the concern with morals: abandoned, it was the booty, as it were, of weaker talents. Then, some, spurning the effort of speaking well, having gone back to shaping minds and setting up rules of life, held on to – if it could be divided – the better part, and yet unduly claimed for themselves a highly insolent name, that only they should be called pursuers of wisdom; which neither the greatest generals nor those who engaged most illustriously in councils about the greatest things and the administration of the whole state ever dared to rightfully claim for themselves: for they preferred to do the best things, rather than to promise them.”

The philosophers’ intellectual deficiency appears through the medical metaphor of weakness or sickness, which contrasts them with the orator, earlier attributed *uis ingenii* (1 *pr.* 12). Nevertheless, they took over ethics as their “booty”. The martial metaphor is softened through *uelut* but implies the process was unrightful.³⁶¹ They are then joined by those shunning the effort required by rhetorical training. The redoubling of the account adds vigour to the point and distracts from the fact that ethics was first abandoned by orators. Philosophy figures as the easy choice. Furthermore, the verb and the superlative adjective used for the philosophers signal the impertinence of their claim to the honorific title.³⁶² Instead, the adjective, adverb and legal verb used for the statesmen imply that they would have deserved it.³⁶³ A divide is created between talented and hard-working orators who serve the community and act and untalented or lazy philosophers who are arrogant and only promise (that is, talk).

Quintilian then concedes that ancient philosophers conveyed good notions and lived according to their precepts but asserts that in contemporary times, “the greatest vices” (*maxima uitia*) hide behind that name (1 *pr.* 15). This leaves the door open for acknowledging some philosophers, like Plato, as authorities.³⁶⁴ As for modern philosophers, it is their shabby appearance that singles them out, rather than their studies. Show prevails over essence, and even the knowledge they claim as theirs is, really, of the public domain (1 *pr.* 15-16). Quintilian reiterates his point:

Sed ea et sciet optime et eloquetur orator: qui si fuisset aliquando perfectus, non a philosophorum scholis uirtutis praecepta peterentur. Nunc necesse est ad eos [aliquando] auctores recurrere, qui desertam, ut dixi, partem oratoriae artis, meliorem praesertim,

³⁶¹ For *praeda* Aßfahl 1932, 92.

³⁶² See Lendon 1997, 36; 44 on the reification of prestige through light metaphors and on how *uir clarissimus* hardened into a term to design senators from the second century CE. Quintilian employs metaphors of light to differentiate between an active public and an inactive segregated life, as well as for other matters such as fame, truth, intelligence, and features of *ornatus*: see Aßfahl 1932, 128.

³⁶³ *Vindicare* is juridical jargon: OLD *uindicare* 3.

³⁶⁴ See Viano 1995, 194 on this differentiation between wise philosophers of old and contemporary ones. Compare Catulus’ differentiation between old and contemporary Greeks at Cic. *De or.* 2.20. Sen. *Dial.* 10.10.1 recommends Fabianus by counting him not among contemporary, but among “true and old” (*ex veris et antiquis*) philosophers.

occupauerunt, et uelut nostrum reposcere, non ut illorum nos utamur inuentis, sed ut illos alienis usos esse doceamus. (Inst. 1 pr. 17)

“But these things the orator will both know and speak about best: if the perfect orator had sometime come into being, precepts on virtue would not be asked from the philosophers’ schools. Now it is necessary to [sometimes] go back to those authors who, as I said, took over the part of oratory that was left behind, especially since it is the better one, and to claim it back like something belonging to us, not so that we may use something that they came up with, but to show that they were using someone else’s property.”

Military vocabulary again renders the unrightful ‘appropriation’ of philosophy, legal vocabulary its revindication, and the final clause admits no doubt about the orators being in the right.³⁶⁵ Acknowledging his reiteration, Quintilian adds weight to the point. At Cic. *De or.* 1.41, Scaevola tells Crassus with similarly legal-military language that, if they did not happen to be “in your kingdom” (*in tuo regno*), he would not have tolerated what he was saying and have accused him of having made an attack upon “someone else’s belongings” (*alienas possessiones*); and that jurists and philosophers and all the other specialists whose knowledge he claimed for the orator would have to complain. Quintilian may be echoing this expression, rebutting Scaevola’s (politely counterfactual) rebuttal of Crassus. The comment that “now” is the right moment is a prelude to the idea that the present is the optimal moment to strive for the ideal (§2.3.3). The passage climaxes in a definition of the orator that is subtly, but tellingly, different from the first one:

Sit igitur orator uir talis qualis uere sapiens appellari possit, nec moribus modo perfectus (nam id mea quidem opinione, quamquam sunt qui dissentiant, satis non est), sed etiam scientia et omni facultate dicendi; qualis fortasse nemo adhuc fuerit, sed non ideo minus nobis ad summa tendendum est. (Inst. 1 pr. 18)

“So let therefore the orator be such a man who can be called truly wise, not just perfect regarding morals (for this is, in my opinion at least, even if some may disagree, not enough), but also regarding his learning and every faculty of speaking; such as nobody perhaps has yet been; but we should not, because of this, strive any less for perfection.”

Through the adversative *nec ... modo ... sed etiam* construction, the stress is placed on the orator’s technical proficiency, not on his morality, a point reinforced by the comment in the parenthesis. If at first (1 pr. 9) Quintilian had signalled that the *Institutio* surpasses technical handbooks through its

³⁶⁵ OLD *alienus* 1, OLD *possessio* 1, OLD *reposco*, OLD *occupo* 2.

concern with the orator's character, now he distances it from philosophy. The remark that the ideal has perhaps not come into being yet, but that one should strive for it nonetheless, again points to the possibility of reaching perfection. The definition of the orator as "truly" wise continues the opposition to philosophers: while they claimed for themselves the title of *sapientes* (1 *pr.* 14), this orator will be wise. Again, the philosophers' appearances are opposed to the orator's substance.

While Cicero in the *De inuentione* describes the orators as low-minded but superficially eloquent, and in the *De oratore* Socrates' successors as high-minded, Quintilian inverts the evaluations: orators were more talented, philosophers less so. Despite elsewhere attributing greater authority to Cicero's late rhetorical works than to his earlier ones (§2.1.2), here he follows the *De inuentione* over the *De oratore* in not mentioning Socrates, who in the *De oratore* originates this separation.³⁶⁶ Again, we see how Quintilian appropriates features of his model selectively, to support his own line of argument. Making Socrates, whose views he elsewhere equates with Plato's by calling him his spokesman (2.15.26; 2.21.4), responsible for the separation of the two disciplines would undermine his claim that Plato never criticised rhetoric and really anticipated his own vision (see §3.1.1). Cicero narrates the separation of philosophy and oratory to plead for a philosophically informed orator, Quintilian to argue for the 're'-appropriation of philosophy by orators, denying the very *raison d'être* of philosophers.³⁶⁷ This is a more subtle, but substantial and perhaps more concrete, assertion of *aemulatio* of Cicero than the one staged through the ship allegory in book 12.

Quintilian insists that orators care about deeds and substance, philosophers about words and appearances, and that philosophy belongs to oratory. In the *Preface*, he strengthens his position through reiteration, and he repeats it again when discussing the relationship between the orator and philosophy, affirming that he does not want his orator to be a philosopher (12.2.6).³⁶⁸ Philosophers appear as not engaging in the practical administration of the state but teaching about it in the abstract even if they have really no idea because they lack experience. The orator, instead, is characterized through his real-life activity in the service of the community, and is defined thus:

Atqui ego illum quem instituo Romanum quendam uelim esse sapientem, qui non secretis disputationibus sed rerum experimentis atque operibus uere ciuilem uirum exhibeat. (Inst. 12.2.7)

³⁶⁶ May and Wisse 2001, 23 remark that Cicero, attributing the separation of the two disciplines to Socrates, presents his new philosophically trained orator "not as an innovation, but as a return to the original state of things".

³⁶⁷ The goal is not, *pace* Walzer 2003, 38, to restore the original unity of philosophy and oratory by setting the two disciplines on equal footing, but, as Fernández López 2003, 34 writes, to integrate philosophy into oratory.

³⁶⁸ Commenting on this passage, Austin 1948, 77 points to the contrast between *gymnasium/palaestra* and real *pugna* at Cic. *Orat.* 42, *De or.* 1.81, while Rocheblave 1890, 19 remarks on Quintilian's negative depiction of philosophers (and condemns it).

“But I would like the orator whom I educate be a sort of Roman wise man, who will prove himself to be a truly civic man not in secret discussions, but in his experience of things and in his deeds.”

Again, the action-oriented orator is set against talking philosophers. *Vere ciuilem* echoes *uere ciuilis* (1 *pr.* 10).³⁶⁹ The link between the two passages is reinforced through a reference to the separation of philosophy and oratory:

Sed quia deserta ab iis qui se ad eloquentiam contulerunt studia sapientiae non iam in actu suo atque in hac fori luce uersantur, sed in porticus et gymnasia primum, mox in conuentus scholarum recesserunt, id quod est oratori necessarium nec a dicendi praeceptoribus traditur ab iis petere nimirum necesse est apud quos remansit. (Inst. 12.2.8)

“But – since the study of wisdom, abandoned by those who devoted themselves to eloquence, does not dwell in its implementation and in this light of the forum, but first stepped back into porticoes and gymnasia, then soon into schoolrooms, and since that which is necessary to the orator is not taught by the teachers of speaking, it must of course be sought from those with whom it stayed behind.”

As in 1 *pr.* 13-14, the separation is presented in terms of spatial movement. Here, we find the trajectory of philosophy away from public activity, and a contrast between open and closed spaces, light and darkness, the forum and closed rooms.³⁷⁰ The description of the venues seems to indicate a shift from Greece (porticoes and gymnasia) to Rome (schoolrooms), and the progressive spatial closure (from airy half-open venues to closed rooms) may signal the increasing alienation of philosophers from reality. This would agree with the differentiation between old and contemporary philosophers (1 *pr.* 15): old philosophy in Greece may have been somewhat useful, but contemporary philosophy in Rome is not. Philosophers are the opposite of orators, but also of good teachers: their activity was earlier described through light imagery, and thus approximated to that of orators (1.2.9-14).

Quintilian exclaims that philosophical notions would appear much greater and more beautiful if those who taught them were also eloquent (12.2.8), and adds a wish:

³⁶⁹ See Whitton 2019, 475-76 on how Pliny presents Titius Aristo in *Ep.* 1.22, and in the *Letters* as a whole himself as such an orator.

³⁷⁰ See Spina 2010, 11 on the link between shadow and philosophical or school-like speech. Compare *Inst.* 11.1.35, on which (and on its reworking in *Plin. Ep.* 1.22.6) see Whitton 2019, 80.

Vtinamque sit tempus umquam quo perfectus aliquis qualem optamus orator hanc artem superbo nomine et uitii quorundam bona eius corrumpentium inuisam uindicet sibi ac uelut rebus repetitis in corpus eloquentiae adducat. (Inst. 12.2.9)

“May there once be a time when the perfect orator whom we wish for will reclaim this art [philosophy], which is made hateful by its pompous name and the vices of those who corrupt its qualities, for himself and, like after having gained back his possessions, will reinsert her into the body of eloquence.”

As in the preface, philosophers are said to have claimed an honorific title undeservedly, their vices are pointed out, and legal language implies that their appropriation of philosophy was wrongful.³⁷¹ Once the ideal orator has come into being, he will instruct students in everything they need to know; thanks to his practical experience, he will be a better teacher than the philosophers.

Then, Quintilian gives an idea of what this ‘re’-appropriation of philosophy should look like by discussing how orators are concerned with ethics, logic and natural philosophy (12.2.10-23), and citing Pericles, Demosthenes and Cicero as philosophically trained orators (12.2.23).³⁷² Like Crassus at *De or.* 3.61-69, he reviews the usefulness of different philosophical schools, but instead of expressing a preference for the Academy, he concludes that the orator should be eclectic: *oratori uero nihil necesse est in cuiusquam iurare leges* (12.2.26-27: “The orator however does not need to swear allegiance to anyone’s laws”).³⁷³ He makes it plain that his approach does not correspond to Cicero’s, whose indebtedness to the Academy he mentions (12.2.23; see *Cic. Brut.* 315, *Orat.* 12).³⁷⁴ The legal vocabulary recalls 1 *pr.* 23 (*ius ipsum rhetorices interpretetur*; §1.1.2). And at 2.13.1, Quintilian himself rejects giving precepts which are “like some laws bound by unchangeable necessity” (*quasi quasdam leges immutabili necessitate constrictas*).³⁷⁵ I will come to the similarity between the portrayal of

³⁷¹ OLD *repeto* 10.

³⁷² See *Cic. De or.* 1.89; 3.138-39 on Demosthenes being Plato’s pupil, Pericles Anaxagoras’. See Döpp 1985, 161 on Quintilian, pairing these orators, reflecting the pairing of Pericles and Demosthenes at *Cic. De or.* 3.71, *Brut.* 239, *Orat.* 15. Compare on Pericles’ philosophical training Val. Max. 8.9 (ext).2, on Demosthenes’ Gell. *NA* 3.13.1; also Apul. *Apol.* 15. Plut. *Dem.* 5.5 reports this information attributing it to Hermippus who in turn knows it from some anonymous memoirs (ἁδεσπότης ὑπομνήμασιν), which may imply that it is not beyond doubt. At *Inst.* 10.1.81, Quintilian remarks that Cicero admits his debt to philosophers.

³⁷³ See also *Inst.* 7.3.16 on philosophers’ *seruitus ... ad certa se uerba adstringendi*; Sen. *Ep.* 71.6 also distances himself from philosophers focusing on words. Compare Michel 1983, 210 on Quintilian getting to his Stoic definition of oratory (*Inst.* 2.15.34 through a dialogical and eclectic approach recalling the Academic tradition and Leigh 2004, 132 on Quintilian not presenting an orthodox representation of the Stoic position regarding the emotions. See also Aßfahl 1932, 77.

³⁷⁴ As Austin 1948, xvi-xvii; 88 writes, Quintilian like Cicero aims to establish which school is the most useful for the orator, but refusing to follow one showcases a neutrality typical of historical writers. See Döpp 1985, 168; 171 on how Quintilian, reviewing different philosophical schools, refers to two Ciceronian passages (*De or.* 3.67 and *Orat.* 46) and signals his detachment from philosophy.

³⁷⁵ See on this refusal to be dogmatic Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006, 201; compare *Inst.* 4.1.62; 5.13.7; 5.13.60; 8 *pr.* 2; 9.4.109; 9.4.133.

philosophers and of other bad teachers presently. The dichotomy between the philosophers' words and orators' actions is tied to an opposition of Greeks and Romans:

An fortitudinem, iustitiam, fidem, continentiam, frugalitatem, contemptum doloris ac mortis melius alii docebunt quam Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, Mucii aliique innumerabiles? Quantum enim Graeci praeceptis ualent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis. (Inst. 12.2.30)

“But will others teach better about braveness, justice, trust, continence, frugality, contempt of pain and death than the Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, Mucii and uncountable others? As strong as the Greeks are regarding precepts, the Romans are regarding examples – which is greater.”

The message is clear: philosophers engage in a pursuit which is essentially Greek and un-Roman. They teach virtues, but (as the caricatures make abundantly clear) do not practise them. Virtues are learnt by following exemplars, and these are Roman.³⁷⁶

This hostile stance towards philosophers is one which Quintilian adopts repeatedly. Another pointed attack can be found in the following chapter. Both legal experts and philosophers, he claims, shunned the work required of those training for eloquence, and “took shelter in these little side-paths of idleness” (12.3.11: *confugerint ad haec deuerticula desidia*).³⁷⁷ The ‘straight’ path to follow would have been that of eloquence, but both groups took a digression – and a murky one at that, the diminutive implies. They lazily abandoned rhetorical training, choosing second-rate alternatives. Jurists turned to registers and rubrics. About philosophers, we read:

... alii pigritiae adrogantioris, qui, subito fronte conficta inmissaque barba, ueluti despexissent oratoria praecepta paulum aliquid sederunt in scholis philosophorum ut deinde in publico tristes, domi dissoluti captarent auctoritatem contemptu ceterorum: philosophia enim simulari potest, eloquentia non potest. (Inst. 12.3.12)

³⁷⁶ The passage is followed by a textual crux, on which see Austin 1943, 42–43. See Roller 2004, 6; 23 and Pina Polo 2004, 159 on the commemoration of exemplary deeds in Roman discourse conveying normative social values, and Shuttleworth Kraus 2005, 186 on the importance of exemplars in Roman historiography. See also Dressler 2013, 194 on Seneca’s argument for the efficacy of *exempla* in *Ep.* 94; compare the remark that *exempla* are more powerful than *praecepta* at *Ep.* 6.5 See Lausberg 1960, 227–32, §§410–26 on the types of *exempla*.

³⁷⁷ Compare Cic. *Mur.* 29. See Steel 2001, 170 on how Cicero in the *Pro Murena* pitches military activity against legal science to make Murena appear in a better light than his opponent Sulpicius, but simultaneously underlines the importance of oratory to strengthen his position as an advocate and politician. See Antonius’ criticism of the *iuris consulti* at *De or.* 1.236.

“... the others were of a more arrogant kind of laziness, who, having suddenly started frowning and growing a beard, sat for a little while in the philosophical schools as if they despised rhetorical precepts, so that then they could – being gloomy in public, lascivious at home – affect authority by despising everyone else: for philosophy can be simulated, eloquence cannot be.”

Again, there is a negative element of show: Quintilian’s philosophers pretend superiority over oratory based on appearances. They walk around long-bearded and shabbily dressed feigning seriousness in public, but leading a dissolute life; their description recalls caricatures of philosophers in Martial or Juvenal, and Seneca’s warnings to Lucilius against affecting philosophical dress.³⁷⁸ They figure as arrogant, lazy, lacking talent and practical experience, and are contrasted with the (ideal) orator, who in accord with the Catonian maxim will be a ‘true Roman’ engaging in public life. As scholars have shown, this negative portrayal of philosophers is a key difference from Cicero, who had envisaged an orator who (like himself) was widely educated and philosophically versed.³⁷⁹ Ridiculing them, Quintilian undermines their credibility and justifies his request that philosophical knowledge should belong to the orator.³⁸⁰ And attributing a didactic mission to his orator, he makes his vision self-perpetuating: in the future, orators will learn from orators. Giving a prominent place to the orator’s didactic engagement, he brings his activity into proximity with his own didactic one.

One could add that while this contrast between orators and philosophers on the grounds that the one group acts, the others talk, differs from Cicero’s vision of the philosophically trained orator, it can be detected in Seneca the Younger – even if the other way around. Seneca re-brands contemplative *otium* as ‘real’ activity, and conversely the engagement with business, *negotium*, as a waste of time.³⁸¹ Again and again, in the *Letters*, he exhorts Lucilius to retire from public activity to devote himself to philosophy.³⁸² For Seneca, philosophers are those who act, and he repeatedly contrasts words with actions, speaking with acting. For example: *Non est philosophia populare artificium nec ostentationi*

³⁷⁸ See on this idea that philosophy can be simulated Cassin 1995, 106 and Scarano Ussani 2003, 289. As Roche 2016, 441 writes, the notion that philosophers cover moral vice through ‘philosophical dress’ is a standard trope of invective against them (e.g. Mart. 1.24; 9.27; 9.48, Juv. 2.4-13). Gellius also mocks shabby philosophers (e.g. *N.A.* 9.2.4). Seneca is eager to differentiate his own ideas of a philosophical lifestyle from such a perception of philosophers and urges Lucilius to avoid ‘philosophical’ dress; see esp. *Ep.* 5.2; 29.5-6. See also Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.2.

³⁷⁹ See esp. Cic. *De or.* 1.17-20; 1.72; 3.142-43, *Orat.* 12-13; 19.

³⁸⁰ Adamietz 1986, 2232; Austin 1948, xviii; Cassin 1995, 115-16; also Adamietz 1966, 12. See also Fernández López 2003, 34; Fernández López 2010, 310 on how Quintilian must discredit philosophers to appropriate the authority usually attributed to them for the orators.

³⁸¹ Cf. Griffin 1976, 317-18 on how *officium* with its traditionally positive connotations is transferred from forensic business to philosophical reflection in the *De otio* and the *De breuitate uitae* (*Dial.* 8 and 10). At *Dial.* 8.4.1-2, Seneca says that contemplative life allows one to serve humanity through one’s writings, rather than just one state through one’s political engagement; similarly *Dial.* 9.3.4. One should not busy oneself randomly, following the crowd: *Dial.* 9.12.1-3; 10.3.4. Seneca rejects the notion that *otium* should be confined to retirement (the stance chosen by Quintilian), describing it as the time when one ‘really’ lives: *Dial.* 10.3.5; 10.11.1. At *Dial.* 10.14.1, he redefines *otium* as the time devoted to philosophical reflection and at 10.14.5, he claims that only those dwell “in true business” (*in ueris officiis*) who engage with philosophy: all other endeavours, whether leisurely activities (like banquets or games) or traditional *officia* (like forensic activity) are useless occupations.

³⁸² E.g. Sen. *Ep.* 19.1; 31.2-4.

paratum: non in verbis sed in rebus est (Ep. 16.3: “Philosophy is not a popular art nor one that is made for display: it does not lie in words, but in things.”). Just as poignantly, he later writes:

... facere docet philosophia, non dicere, et hoc exigit, ut ad legem suam quisque vivat, ne orationi vita dissentiat vel ipsa inter se vita. (Ep. 20.2)

“... philosophy teaches how to act, not how to speak, and it requires that everyone lives following its rule, so that one’s speech may not be inconsistent with one’s way of life, or one’s way of life inconsistent in itself.”

The requirement that life and speech should be consonant agrees with Quintilian’s second definition of aptness (see §2.2.2), but the notion that philosophy teaches people how to ‘act’ is diametrically opposed to his depiction of philosophers. At Ep. 24.15, Seneca addresses and denies the opinion that he treats words, not deeds, thus signalling that his position is not one which readers (used to the equation of *otium* and idleness) would expect: *hoc enim turpissimum est quod nobis obici solet, verba nos philosophiae, non opera tractare* (“for that is most disgraceful which is usually brought forward against us, that we treat the words, not the deeds of philosophy”).³⁸³ Furthermore, he describes not forensic activity, but philosophical retirement through light metaphors.³⁸⁴ Quintilian, attributing actions to orators, words to philosophers, reintroduces the more mainstream view Seneca was overturning. However, the neatness of his dichotomy may indicate that he is not simply operating with the traditional view, but reinstating it in direct, if implicit, contraposition to its rejection by Seneca. I have argued above that Quintilian adopts and rephrases Seneca’s parallelisation of a man’s life and his style (§2.2.2) and will later discuss how Quintilian discredits Seneca as a literary critic, didactic figure, stylist, and moral authority (§§4.1.1-2) but borrows from him when it suits him (§4.2.1; 4.2.3). This generally duplicitous approach to Seneca would support the impression that Quintilian’s words-actions dichotomy may be a prominent, if implicit, case of polemical reception.³⁸⁵ If so, he would be adopting and overturning a Senecan template to support his refashioning of the Ciceronian ideal – just as he refers to Plato but gives a Stoic definition of the orator and oratory.

Regardless of this suggestion, Quintilian’s dichotomy raises a question: how can he devalue ‘mere words’ without defeating the purpose of a rhetorical handbook, and why does he do it? On the one hand, as we have seen, this devaluation is instrumental to his undermining of philosophers; it lends credibility to the request that philosophy should be ‘re’-integrated into oratory, which in turn supports his claim to novelty for his conception of the orator. On the other, it plays a central role in the

³⁸³ Rocheblave 1890, 36 points out Seneca’s reiterated setting of *res* above *verba*, and then states that the *rhetoires*, and foremost (*in primis*) Quintilian, valued words above all, and gave “no or very little” (*nulla aut minima*) importance to things. I agree with the first part of his argument.

³⁸⁴ E.g. Sen. *Dial.* 7.20.6.

³⁸⁵ Adamietz 1986, 2238 notes that Quintilian rejects Seneca’s vision of a philosophical education.

construction of his didactic persona. Austin has convincingly explained the harshness of Quintilian's critique of philosophers through the circumstance that by his time, different schools, both philosophical and rhetorical, flourished in Rome, and that unlike Cicero, as the head of one of them he must assert his own educational programme against others.³⁸⁶ That this is indeed the issue is confirmed by the fact that Quintilian discredits philosophers and other didactic figures in similar ways.³⁸⁷ Thus, he defends *grammaticae* against those who regard it as unnecessary, using the same architectural imagery he had used to reproach those omitting preliminary studies (1 *pr.* 3; 1.4.5). Seneca may again be in play: at *Ep.* 88.3, he engages in a biting polemic against grammarians. However, Quintilian also criticises grammarians who take their studies too far. About some hyper-enthusiasts of etymology, he writes: *Inde prauis ingeniis ad foedissima usque ludibria labuntur* (*Inst.* 1.6.32: "Because of their corrupt ingeniousness, they fall onto the most disgraceful frivolities"). The choice of the word *ludibria* exposes their activity as lacking seriousness.³⁸⁸ Regarding text-exegesis, he says that concentration on *minutiae* curbs natural talent – as do pedantic rhetorical treatises (1.7.33-34; 1 *pr.* 24-25, §1.1.2). The discussion of *grammaticae* ends with an anecdote showing the superfluity of endless technical discussions: the Alexandrian grammarian Didymus dismissed a story as ridiculous, only to be refuted by someone citing one of his own writings as a source (1.8.20): he wrote so many unmemorable works on irrelevant topics that he forgot about them.³⁸⁹ *Sen. Ep.* 88.37 also points to Didymus as someone who wrote an absurd number of works (4000!), which reinforces the impression that Quintilian may be reacting to his polemic against *grammaticae* in the same letter.³⁹⁰

A similar balancing act can be seen in Quintilian's much-discussed remarks on contemporary declamatory practice. While maintaining the importance of declamation as an exercise, he criticises those declaimers who spend their whole lives within the walls of the schools, treating themes too far off forensic reality.³⁹¹ Here as well, a highly critical section culminates in an anecdote: such declaimers are compared to a man whom Alexander the Great saw engaging in the laborious, but useless occupation of throwing chickpeas on a needletop, and rewarded with a measure of pulses (2.20.3-4).³⁹²

³⁸⁶ Austin 1948, xv.

³⁸⁷ Rocheblave 1890, 23-25 similarly writes that Quintilian's polemic against philosophers and certain grammarians and declaimers is aimed at furthering his own school.

³⁸⁸ OLD *ludibrium* 1b. The derogatory notion of play, as opposed to serious pursuits, is central here.

³⁸⁹ See Ax 2011, 403 on *Inst.* 1.8.20

³⁹⁰ Another passage where Quintilian may be echoing *Sen. Ep.* 88 is *Inst.* 3.1.6: ... *nemo non didicisse mauult quam discere*. Compare *Sen. Ep.* 88.2: *Non discere debemus ista, sed didicisse*.

³⁹¹ Quintilian condemns declamation that is too far off reality, but recommends it as a necessary exercise if pursued properly: see Winterbottom 1983, 225; Fantham 2002, 272; Hömke 2002, 55; Calboli 2010, 25. See Kaster 2001, 323-25; 334 and Imber 2001, 211 generally on the importance of declamation for inculcating values into young pupils. For Fantham 1978, 113, Seneca the Elder sees oratory as an evolving species past its prime, while Quintilian blames corruption on the artificiality of training in declamation and the affectation of over-ornamented style. Compare *Juv.* 7.173 or *Tac. Dial.* 35.4-5.

³⁹² See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 89 for parallel passages; they assume that the man's activity would entail the cooked chickpeas being pierced by the needle, which likens it to the process of threading. See Hénaff and Morhange 2009, 97 on the ambiguous status of the anecdotal: a general notion is conveyed through the narration of a particular event.

We have seen how Quintilian's caricatures of philosophers serve as a negative foil against which the orator's desired qualities emerge more sharply, and we will see that he does the same with contemporary orators of whose style he disapproves (§4.2.1-3). He employs this strategy also for his self-representation: he pictures bad didactic figures (philosophers but also grammarians and rhetoricians) and sets himself against them, which reinforces his persona as an experienced and down-to-earth, not pedantic but thorough and praxis-oriented teacher. The effort to distance himself from the kind of teacher lacking forensic experience is particularly palpable in his treatment of *grammaticae*, where he repeatedly signals that his is not a complete treatment but just a sort of aide-memoire for grammarians (*Inst.* 1.4.17; 1.5.54): he signals that while he is engaging with *grammaticae*, he is doing so with the gentlemanly detachment of an advocate who also happens to know much about it.³⁹³ We get the impression that Quintilian is anxious to strike a balance between upholding the importance of basic teaching (and providing it to an extent that justifies his claim that his work is more complete than that of other writers: 1 *pr.* 3; §1.1.2) and upholding his persona of a man of real-life experience (which equally distances him from other didactic figures: 1 *pr.* 24-25).

This prompts a follow-up question: are there other reasons why Quintilian takes such pains to differentiate himself from these teacher-figures? Here, it is worth turning to Cicero again. In the *De oratore* and *Orator*, a recurrent contrast is built between *otium* and *negotium*, with *negotium* clearly marked as the domain of Roman men active in the forum (Cic. *De or.* 2.55; 2.60).³⁹⁴ *Otium* is connected to Greekness (*De or.* 1.80-82; 1.221; 2.17, *Orat.* 64-66). However, some Greeks are mentioned as eloquent (*De or.* 2.55-58). Since *otium* is also what gives the noble Romans time to engage in useful theoretical debates, there is no radical rejection of it (*De or.* 2.20). Crassus at *De or.* 3.63 sets up a contrast between philosophical idleness and forensic activity, but also calls some philosophers *boni uiri*: this is far from Quintilian's drawing of all philosophers (except old ones) as full of vices. Furthermore, as is well known, Cicero maintains the importance of philosophers and their teachings by presenting himself as having learnt most from the Academy, rather than from "rhetoricians' workshops" (*Orat.* 12: *ex rhetorum officinis*). There is no such clear-cut equation of idle chatter, Greekness, and philosophers. What we do see, however, is a consistent belittling of teachers of rhetoric, be they Greek or Roman. At *De or.* 2.76, Catulus complains about teachers of rhetoric who have no practical experience but claim to teach the young. At *De or.* 2.132-33, it is Antonius who contrasts teachers of rhetoric with men of real forensic experience. At *De or.* 3.76, Crassus describes all those who write rhetorical arts as *perridiculos* ("utterly ridiculous"). And Cicero, in his own persona, in the *Orator*

³⁹³ See Kaster 1988, 54 and Kaster 1995, xxix on the social status of grammarians between lower and higher social classes and their progressive achievement of a higher social status, and Atherton 1998, 220 or McNelis 2007, 285-86 on rhetoricians being regarded more highly. That being 'schoolmasterly' is not a compliment appears e.g. in Epius Marcellus' ironical advice to Helvidius Priscus not to behave in a schoolmasterly way towards Vespasian at Tac. *Hist.* 4.8.4.

³⁹⁴ See Gildenhard 2007, 207-8; 213-14 on the didactic setup of Cicero's *Tusculans* and on the idea there and at *De or.* 2.17 that Greeks speak too much and lack judgement, while Romans know how to maintain their dignity in intellectual pursuits and have a better grasp of practical ethics.

makes clear that he is not teaching the ideal orator, but describing him: *non quem doceam quaero, sed quem probem* (Orat. 142: “I am not looking for the [orator] whom I may teach, but whom I may approve of”). He then imagines a backlash for writing about rhetoric on the grounds that it is a less established domain than jurisprudence. This clearly shows the difference of his outlook from Quintilian’s, who, presenting philosophers as idle and aligning himself with orators, may be said to counteract Cicero’s negative views on rhetorical teachers to preserve his own authority.

We have seen that Quintilian constructs a dichotomy between speaking philosophers and acting orators, which supports his request that the orator should eclectically ‘re’-appropriate the knowledge held by philosophers. This corroborates his claim that he is going beyond Cicero. By claiming Plato as a model and operating with some Stoic notions, he can be said to implement the ‘re’-appropriation he recommends himself, as often performing what he teaches. I have also argued that the dichotomy bears a Senecan, rather than Ciceronian, stamp, but that it can be read as a reaction to Cicero’s belittling of professional teacher-figures: Quintilian aligns himself with his orator, bad teachers with philosophers, to avoid appearing as one of the alienated didactic figures his model ridicules.

3.1.3 Omitting Political Philosophers

We have seen that Quintilian contrasts orators with philosophers (and other poor didactic figures) on the grounds that the former ‘act’, the latter merely ‘talk’. I will come to the depiction of the orator and to the question what it means that he ‘acts’ in the next section. Now, I would like to briefly address a conspicuous absence, that of first-century Stoics opposing Imperial power.

As Antonio La Penna writes, Quintilian presents his dislike of philosophers as motivated by their anti-civic position.³⁹⁵ To support his claim that they should be displaced by orators, he depicts them as politically irrelevant. In the *Institutio*, there is no space for philosophers’ political engagement, likely a chief reason for Domitian to expel them from Rome.³⁹⁶ Mentioning (near-)contemporary opposition to Imperial power would be politically tactless, and omitting them is a necessary premise of his claim that public activity belongs to orators.³⁹⁷ Considering their prominence, Quintilian would have been aware of figures like Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus and their defiant deaths,³⁹⁸ or of their

³⁹⁵ La Penna 2003, 151-53.

³⁹⁶ Tac. *Agr.* 2.2, Suet. *Dom.* 10.3, Cass. Dio 67.13.2; see Gibson 2020, 97. Austin 1948, xvi; 78 remarks about *Inst.* 12.2.9 that Domitian’s expulsion of philosophers shows the bitterness of the quarrel, but rejects the view that Quintilian is trying to curry favour with Domitian, and argues for personal conviction. Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 1, 13 on 1 *pr.* 15 suggests that Quintilian is striving to please Domitian.

³⁹⁷ As Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, xlv write, there is little trace of contemporary politics in the *Institutio*.

³⁹⁸ Thrasea was driven to suicide by Nero, his son-in-law Helvidius by Vespasian. Thrasea’s death is reported at Tac. *Ann.* 16.35.1, Suet. *Ner.* 37.1, Helvidius’ at Suet. *Vesp.* 15.1, Cass. Dio 66.12.2. Their exemplary status as stern opponents of imperial power appears e.g. from Juv. 5.32-37: criticism of the stingy host Virro for keeping the good wine for himself (Juv. 5.37-41) is introduced by the remark that (even) Thrasea and Helvidius used to drink good wine when celebrating (tellingly) the birthdays of Cassius and the Brutuses.

famous predecessor Cato the Younger.³⁹⁹ These figures were so iconic that even commemorating them could be dangerous.⁴⁰⁰

One Stoic suicide Quintilian does mention is Cato's, but he makes it purely political: he pairs him with Pompey and adduces him as an "eloquent senator" (*eloquens senator*) to exemplify how a man's standing determines what he can do and say (11.1.36).⁴⁰¹ The only time he refers to Cato's Stoicism, he is praising Cicero for his aptness in poking fun at him in the *Pro Murena*:

Quam molli autem articulo tractauit Catonem! Cuius naturam summe admiratus non ipsius uitio sed Stoicae sectae quibusdam in rebus factam duriores uideri uolebat. (Inst. 11.1.70)

"With what a light touch did he handle Cato! Highly admiring his character, he wanted it to appear that it had become rather too unrelenting regarding some things not through his fault, but through that of the Stoic sect."

Cato the talented, good Roman man is opposed to Cato the inflexible Stoic; the former is preferable to the latter.⁴⁰² Finally, another prominent Stoic suicide which Quintilian does not mention is that of Seneca the Younger, someone he was well-aware of; I will come back to this point in the next chapter (§4.2.2). Given these figures' notoriety, the omission of their deaths must be deliberate. Indeed, omitting uncomfortable information is a strategy Quintilian recommends. Ending his chapter on "clarity" (*perspicuitas*), he writes that the orator must make his point so obvious that it will be impossible for listeners not to understand, like looking into the sun (8.2.23).⁴⁰³ This, as he states in the treatment of *narratio*, entails sometimes shrouding the truth in darkness (4.2.64-65). The orator must choose which information to share.⁴⁰⁴ Adopting this strategy regarding contemporary philosophers, as often he implements his own advice.

³⁹⁹ Thrasea wrote a biography of Cato the Younger (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 37.1) and modelled his suicide after him: Ash 2007) 354-55. In Mart. 1.8, Thrasea and Cato are paired for Stoic orientation and suicide (the final couplet irreverently implies that suicide is an 'easy' way to fame: 1.8.5-6). At Mart. 4.54.7, Thrasea figures as a paradigm of steadfastness. Seneca mentions Cato's exemplary death repeatedly: see esp. *Dial.* 1.2.9-12; 2.2.1-3; 2.2.7; 9.16.4, *Ep.* 13.14; 24.6-8; 67.7; 67.13; 70.19; 71.11; 82.12; 95.71; 98.12; 104.29.

⁴⁰⁰ See Tac. *Agr.* 2.1; 45.1, *Suet. Dom.* 10.3 on Iunius Arulenus Rusticus being killed for having praised Thrasea and Helvidius. See Coleman 1986, 3106 or Fantham 1996, 193 on the executions of Herennius Senecio and Arulenus Rusticus. At Tac. *Dial.* 2.1, the other characters are concerned about the poet Maternus, who 'forgot himself' and 'became' Cato: see Gowing 2005, 113.

⁴⁰¹ Walzer 2003, 29. Bonmots of Cato are reported at *Inst.* 8.2.9, he is mentioned in a *dictum* at 9.2.25; 9.4.75; 3.8.37; 3.8.49; further 5.11.10; 6.3.112. He appears with Cato the Elder at 12.7.4. Cato is praised for a quip against Caesar at 8.2.9, with no mention of his Stoicism. See Pistellato 2020, 280 on Caesar and other declamatory figures of tyrants in the *Institutio*, esp. in *Inst.* 3.8.47-53; 5.10.30; 5.10.71. Compare Gowing 2005, 61 on how Valerius Maximus praises Cato's *libertas*, but not his opposition to Caesar.

⁴⁰² See esp. Cic. *Mur.* 60-64. See on countering sternness with playfulness *Inst.* 2.12.2; 6.3.75.

⁴⁰³ As Fögen 2003, 39 remarks, Quintilian discusses *perspicuitas*, a key feature especially of technical writing, at length. See Lausberg 1960, 274-77, §§528-37 on *perspicuitas*.

⁴⁰⁴ As Dozier 2013, 145 writes, "oratorical clarity depends on the presence of darkness".

To conclude, I will point to a concrete instance where Quintilian may be glossing over an inconvenient name, that of Thrasea Paetus. In his discussion of emotions, he reports a quip which was praised when he was young:

... egregieque nobis adolescentibus dixisse accusator Cossutiani Capitonis uidebatur, Graece quidem, sed in hunc sensum: 'erubescis Caesarem timere.' (Inst. 6.1.14)

“... when I was a youth, the accuser of Cossutianus Capito was thought to have said outstandingly, in Greek, but in this sense: ‘you blush to be afraid of Caesar.’”

Given the timeframe, the emperor must be Nero. Cossutianus Capito was the son-in-law of Epirus Marcellus and like him a notorious *delator* of that time. We know that Capito was convicted *de repetundis* by Thrasea Paetus on behalf of the Cilicians in 57 CE.⁴⁰⁵ According to Tac. *Ann.* 13.33.2, Capito was attacked “with a vehement accusation” (*peruicaci accusatione*), so vehement that he renounced defending himself. At *Ann.* 16.21.3, Capito’s hatred of Thrasea is explained through the latter’s helping the Cilicians. The prominence of both figures and the forceful accusation fit with the success and notoriety Quintilian attributes to it. If this is indeed the episode in question, leaving out Thrasea’s name is consistent with his depiction of philosophers as apolitical.

This is an *argumentum e silentio* and may not prove much. However, the systematic omission of (Stoic) philosophers who opposed imperial power and committed suicide seems deliberate and noteworthy. Quintilian’s careful distribution of ‘light’ and ‘darkness’, to use his own metaphors, contributes to the image he conveys of philosophers and, *ex negatiuo*, of the orator.

3.2 The Ideal Orator as a Man of ‘Action’

3.2.1 Knowledge as a Means, not as an End

We have seen that Quintilian, while claiming a Ciceronian-Platonic pedigree for his orator, in practice tends to operate with Stoic notions and sets up a dichotomy between orators who ‘act’ and philosophers who ‘talk’, perhaps in reaction to Seneca. This supports his un-Ciceronian claim to ‘re’-appropriation of philosophy by orators and distances him from the sort of teachers Cicero belittles. Finally, we have seen how he tactically omits politically engaged philosophers. But what does it mean that orators ‘act’? And what consequences does the devaluation of ‘mere speaking’ have for the status of the knowledge conveyed in the *Institutio*? In this section, I will discuss how the focus of book 12 on forensic activity creates the impression that rhetorical speech is equivalent to ‘action’: orators “do things with words”.⁴⁰⁶ In the next two sections, I will show how the bodily and military metaphors used to describe good style

⁴⁰⁵ See on this case Russell 2001, vol. 2, 25 who comments that the point is unclear, and Petersen 2018, 394-95.

⁴⁰⁶ Austin 1971.

support this depiction,⁴⁰⁷ and address the question how Quintilian reconciles his focus on forensic victory with the claim that the orator is a good man.

The Catonian definition of the ideal orator as the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (*Inst.* 12.1.1) agrees with the Stoic definition of rhetoric as the *bene dicendi scientiam* and supports the portrayal of the orator as a ‘real Roman’. The maxim had already been adopted by Seneca the Elder, who, addressing his sons, elevated Cato to a status of unquestionable truthfulness: *erratis, optimi iuvenes, nisi illam vocem non M. Catonis sed oraculi creditis* (*Controv.* 1 *pr.* 9: “you are wrong, excellent youths, if you do not believe that voice to be not that of Marcus Cato, but rather that of an oracle”).⁴⁰⁸ The idea of the oracle fits with Cato’s own admonition to his son Marcus that he should take his warnings against Greek learning and medicine as if they came from a “bard” (*vates*).⁴⁰⁹ Quintilian at *Inst.* 12.1.1 does not explicitly comment on Cato’s authority, but elsewhere calls him *ensorius* and mentions him as a general, wise man, orator, historian, and expert in law and agriculture of the past.⁴¹⁰ Cato’s hostility, or ambivalence, towards Greek learning,⁴¹¹ and the normative ideas of Roman masculinity he promoted and became proverbial for,⁴¹² are reflected in the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* of the *Institutio*.⁴¹³ The orator is portrayed as a man whose morality is shown, primarily, through his actions.⁴¹⁴ At the end of 12.1, a Vergilian citation supports this portrayal:

⁴⁰⁷ See Aßfahl 1932, 8-9 on this prominent use of bodily metaphors for style.

⁴⁰⁸ Gleason 1995, 103 remarks that this passage raises questions about balancing talent, training and manhood. For Bernstein 2008, 212 Seneca evokes what Cato wrote to Marcus, while Quintilian does not point to his educational role. Bloomer 2015, 350 argues the opposite: Quintilian, writing for the education of the Roman youth, is heir to Cato and other aristocratic Republican families advertising their children’s education.

⁴⁰⁹ Plin. *HN* 29.14 (*Et hoc puta vatem dixisse ...*). See Sciarrino 2011, 7 on Cato using the *vates* as a prop for self-representation. Pliny in *HN* 7.172 also mentions a letter of Cato to his son in which he claims to write about the signs of early death *ut ex oraculo aliquo*. See also Cic. *Rep.* 2.1.

⁴¹⁰ See *Inst.* 12.3.9 for Cato’s juridical expertise, for the epithet *ensorius* 1.7.23; [3.1.19]; 9.4.39; 12.1.35. Compare Cic. *Brut.* 65. See also *HN pr.* 9 on Cato as a stern and honourable man. As Möller 2003, 144 writes, Quintilian leaves little doubt that Cato at least approached his ideal.

⁴¹¹ See Astin 1978, 174-77 on Cato’s sceptical stance towards Greek culture and his displeasure with the Greek embassy of 155 BCE as a corrupting influence of Roman youth (Plut. *Cat. mai.* 4.3-4; 22.5, Plin. *HN* 7.112, Cic. *Rep.* 3.9, on the embassy also *De or.* 2.155-61). Quintilian mentions the encounter at *Inst.* 12.2.35. In the *De senectute*, Cato’s character claims that he learned Greek in old age. See Fuà 1995, 186-87 on possible reasons for Cicero’s drawing of Cato as a cultivated man. Plut. *Cat. mai.* 1.3-4 reports that Cato heard the Pythagorean Nearchus in Tarentum but then reportedly only engaged with Greek culture in old age; “however” (μὲντοι), Plutarch remarks, Cato’s writings betray Greek learning; compare *Cat. mai.* 8.2-3; 12.4; 24.5.

⁴¹² Vell. Pat. 2.128.2-3 mentions both Cato and Cicero as new men reaching the highest honours. See Sen. *Ep.* 87.9-10 on Cato’s frugality. Mart. 10.20, sending his book to Pliny, recommends that he should read it only in the evening because that is when even ‘Catos’ can read it, having had some wine (10.20.21: *tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones*); Pliny cites 10.20.12-21 at *Ep.* 3.21.5. See also Möller 2003, 165 on Cato figuring as the paradigmatic Roman in Cicero.

⁴¹³ As Giebel 1974, 28 remarks, the reference to Cato, representing the non-intellectual, morally upright Roman, suits Quintilian’s criticism of contemporary style and morality. See Gleason 1995, 116 on Quintilian’s attitude exemplifying Roman squeamishness towards Greece and its arts. Compare Beagon 1992, 19 on how Pliny the Elder similarly attacks Greeks (*HN* 29.14-15) but owes much to Greek writers.

⁴¹⁴ As Terrill 2016, 159 writes, Quintilian sets not introspection, but public activity as the expression of morality. See similarly Kühnert 1979, 165, who also argues that the focus on school training in the *Institutio* inadvertently reflects the changed political situation. Also for Clarke 1996, 119, Quintilian is unaware of the changes since Cicero, and his ideal orator could only be the Emperor; similarly Giebel 1974, 30 and Gerbrandy 2020, 41.

An non talem quendam uidetur finxisse Vergilius, quem in seditione uulgi iam faces et saxa iaculantis moderatorem dedit: ‘tum pietate grauem ac meritis si forte uirum quem / conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus adstant’? Habemus igitur ante omnia uirum bonum: post hoc adiciet dicendi peritum: ‘ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.’ (Inst. 12.1.27)

“Or does not Vergil seem to have drawn such an orator, whom he depicted as the moderating force in a riot of the crowd already hurling torches and stones: ‘then, if perchance they have caught sight of a man, venerable through his piety and merits / they are silent, and stand still with raised ears’? Therefore, we have first of all a good man: after that, he will add that he is skilled in speaking: ‘he directs the minds through his words and soothes the hearts.’”

Quintilian first paraphrases Verg *Aen.* 1.148-50, then quotes *Aen.* 1.151-52 and finally *Aen.* 1.153.⁴¹⁵ He comments that Vergil first depicts the man as good, and only afterwards shows him to be eloquent. As Irene Peirano Garrison writes, Quintilian co-opts Vergil’s authority for his definition of the orator.⁴¹⁶ One could perhaps add that, adducing the *Aeneid* passage to illustrate of the power of oratory, he inscribes the Catonian definition of the orator onto it. Servius may have adopted Quintilian’s lens on Vergil’s passage, commenting: *orator enim est uir bonus, dicendi peritus* (“for the orator is the good man, skilled in speaking”). He does not mention Quintilian, but the coincidence is striking. However, on *G.* 1.46, he relates a similar maxim, attributing it directly to Cato.⁴¹⁷

The focus on the orator’s actions as proofs of his character (as opposed to introspection) appears from the very structure of book 12. Quintilian argues that the orator must be good and treats his relationship to philosophy (12.1-2), his historical and juridical knowledge (12.3-4, expanding on 1.10-12; §3.1.1) and touches upon his character and physical attributes (12.5).⁴¹⁸ He discusses the right timing to start in the forum (12.6); then, how to choose (12.7), become acquainted with (12.8) and lead (12.9) lawsuits. This focus on forensic activity is consistent with the *Institutio* at large: epideictic and deliberative oratory are treated in 3.7-8, forensic oratory in 3.9-6.5.⁴¹⁹ This reflects a tendency of rhetorical handbooks, but also the reality of Early Imperial times, when lawsuits gave the most scope

⁴¹⁵ See on this simile e.g. Harrison 1988, 56-57, who points to Hes. *Theog.* 81-93 as a model; Dugan 2009, 178-79, who argues that the statesman of the simile embodies the Republic and already pertains to another age; Feeney 2014, 215-16, who remarks on the friction between the Hesiodic, monarchical intertext and the “Republican atmosphere” of the orator in this image, granting an idealized depiction of power; Beck 2014, 67, who examines its programmatic function on multiple levels.

⁴¹⁶ See Peirano Garrison 2019, 128 on Quintilian’s use of the Vergilian simile to flesh out the depiction of the orator and of his professional domain. For Taisne 1997, 40-41, by inserting the Vergilian image, Quintilian captures his and Cicero’s conception of the perfect orator, enriching the Ciceronian model he emulates.

⁴¹⁷ Serv. *Comm. in Verg. Aen.* 1.151; cf. Galán Hompanera 2019, 42 on Servius’ rendering of the maxim at Serv. *G.* 1.46; Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, xlvii.

⁴¹⁸ Austin 1948, 101 points to Cic. *Off.* 1.83; see also May and Wisse 2001, 23. Cf. Cic. *De or.* 1.17; 1.58; 1.165. See also Möller 2003, 149 on this Ciceronian conception of the generally educated orator.

⁴¹⁹ The Aristotelian (*Rh.* 1358a36-59a5) tripartition of the types of speeches is introduced at *Inst.* 3.3.14-15. Quintilian notes that he follows Cicero (*Inv.* 1.12) in calling the three types *genera causarum*.

for oratory.⁴²⁰ Then, Quintilian treats the orator's style (12.10) and his retirement and closes with some general remarks (12.11).

The question of the status of training and knowledge in the *Institutio* is best discussed starting from 12.3-4, which presents a condensed engagement with it. Quintilian starts by saying that the orator must be well-informed about the law, customs and religion of the community he lives in (12.3.1).⁴²¹ Then, he focuses on the knowledge of the law in a forensic context, giving a concrete motivation for his request: if the orator lacks juridical knowledge, he must rely on others' help. A rhetorical question signals that this would be inappropriate: *Non deformiter respectet et inter subsellia minores aduocatos interroget?* (12.3.2: "Would it not be unseemly for him to look to, and ask advice from, lesser advocates on the backbenches?"). The description of these advocates as *minores* implies that their training and talent are inferior to the orator's, which is stated explicitly later in the chapter (12.3.11-12; §3.1.2). Asking for help, Quintilian adds, would be inappropriate before delivering an oration, but entirely impossible in the context of *altercatio* (12.3.3); one would also risk believing wrong information (12.3.3).⁴²² In the chapter on *altercatio*, he had already shown how bad patrons who aim primarily at showing off simply leave the courtroom:

At quidam, litigatoribus suis illum modo ambitiosum declamandi sudorem praestitisse contenti, cum turba laudantium destituunt subsellia, pugnamque illam decretoriam imperitis ac saepe pullatae turbae relincunt. (Inst. 6.4.6)

"But some [patrons], happy to have granted their clients just the pompous sweat of declaiming, leave the tribunal with the crowd of their fans, and leave that decisive fight to the unskilled and often to the common crowd."

Quintilian establishes a link between declamation, wish for display and obliviousness to the orator's task. This, as we will see in the next chapter (§4.1.3), he claims to be a central feature of 'modernist' orators. The absurdity of such behaviour emerges from the fact that he had called *altercatio* the moment when the fight is harshest: *asperrima in hac parte dimicatio est, nec alibi dixeris magis mucrone pugnari* (6.4.4: "the fighting is harshest in this part, and at no point you would say that the fight is conducted more with the sword's point"). That is, shunning the (forensic) combat at its most intense

⁴²⁰ See Connolly 2009, 140 on how Quintilian adapts Isocrates' conception of the orator by shifting his political responsibilities to the law court. As Cousin 1975, XLVII underlines, judiciary oratory kept blossoming in the Imperial period. See on Quintilian's forensic focus Fernández López 2010, 312-14.

⁴²¹ This reflects the request of Antonius at *De or.* 2.131 that the orator should know his society and its history; see also *Orat.* 119-20. Compare Arist. *Rh.* 1365b23-32.

⁴²² The same idea is expressed at *Inst.* 1.1.8 about *paedagogi*: the very worst are those who are ignorant, but deem themselves learned.

moment, they fail to perform the basic function of the orator, leaving it to less qualified individuals.⁴²³ Also here, Quintilian adds that it is “shameful” (*pudendum*) if clients are helped more by lesser speakers (6.4.7).⁴²⁴ A real orator must strive for victory, not popularity, and have the juridical knowledge needed for *altercatio* if he wants to live up to his name.

In *Inst.* 12.3 as well, Quintilian employs military imagery to make the point that the orator needs to be well-prepared for his case. He states that nobody would think that a good general can direct a battle, but does not know how to recruit soldiers, collect forces, oversee supplies, and choose the places to camp; “preparing for wars certainly comes before conducting them” (12.3.5: *prius est enim certe parare bella quam gerere*). An advocate neglecting to prepare thoroughly for the case, which requires juridical knowledge, would be like such an incompetent general (12.3.5). Instead, a well-trained orator will be best equipped to handle conflicting laws (12.3.8). He will not need information from helpers, but even when receiving it, he will be able to evaluate its veracity; his wide-ranging education makes him superior to a juridical expert confined to his narrow expertise.⁴²⁵ The benefit of the orator’s training and knowledge is linked directly to his forensic activity.

A similar set of ideas underlies 12.4. The orator must have an abundant store of old and new *exempla*. He must know histories and dialogues, but also what is happening on the streets, and what is written by important poets (12.4.1). Knowledge of historiography and poetry is recommended thus:

Nam illa quidem priora aut testimoniorum aut etiam iudicatorum optinent locum, sed haec quoque aut uetustatis fide tuta sunt aut ab hominibus magnis praeceptorum loco ficta creduntur. (Inst. 12.4.2)

“For those [historical narratives] receive either the place of witnesses or even of decrees, but also these [poetical narratives] are sanctioned through the venerableness of antiquity or are thought by people to have been made up by great men in place of precepts.”

Great poetry is credited with an inherently didactic function, while no didactic or persuasive agenda is ascribed to historiography. Historical *exempla* are an essential part of the orator’s argumentative arsenal and will allow him to speak independently from advisors.⁴²⁶ Knowledge of the past will prematurely

⁴²³ Compare Horster 2003, 187-88 on how Antonius belittles jurists at *De or.* 1.249, and the stance generally in Cicero that engaging in a profession for of money is unsuitable for a senator.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 7.17.9 for a parallel of *pullatae turbae*.

⁴²⁵ Compare on the importance of prudence in an orator Cic. *De or.* 3.55. Scarano Ussani 2003, 290 observes that Quintilian expresses respect for jurisprudence but neither mentions jurists of Imperial times nor seems to consider it a legitimate contemporary science.

⁴²⁶ Quintilian later remarks that the orator’s knowledge are the weapons (*arma*) he must have at hand (*Inst.* 12.5.1).

give him an authority (*auctoritas*) otherwise attributed to old age (12.4.2), surpassing that of older men whose insight is confined to their own lifetime, and generally of anyone who is not a (senior) peer.⁴²⁷

The importance of historical knowledge is emphasised repeatedly in the *Institutio*. Pupils should start reading historiography early with the *rheta*r (2.4.2), *exempla* drawn from literature are one kind of technical proof next to signs and arguments (5.11.5-6).⁴²⁸ Historiography is discussed (10.1.31-34) next to other genres before the overview of authors and recommended less for stylistic reasons than for the information it conveys, that will allow the orator not to expect all proofs from his client, but to choose examples from olden times.⁴²⁹ These are “more powerful because only they lack the indictments of hate and partiality” (10.1.34: *hoc potentiora quod ea sola criminibus odii et gratia uacant*).⁴³⁰ This anticipates the claim to impartiality expressed by Tacitus, in similar wording, at *Ann.* 1.1.3: *sine ira et studio* (“without anger and bias”). Its projection here directly onto historiography is curious in view of the genre’s connections to oratory, emerging perhaps most clearly from Cic. *De or.* 2.51-64: Antonius sets historiography as the orator’s business and allows for embellishment.⁴³¹ It would be surprising if Quintilian were unaware of Cicero’s discussion, and generally of the possibility that historians could have their own agendas. Be it as it may, the claim that histor(iograph)y is impartial supports his point that such arguments are useful. It is also striking how his stance towards knowledge in *Inst.* 1.10-12 and 12.3-4 differs. When requiring the *orbis ... doctrinae* to set his project into a Ciceronian-Platonic tradition, Quintilian reprimands putative interlocutors concerned with the immediate benefits of rhetoric (1.12.18; §3.1.1); now that he is envisaging, more concretely, the adult orator’s activity, he gives a practical explanation for the usefulness of learning. This is a good example of how he adapts his argument to the immediate context within his work.

The usefulness of the orator’s long training is thematised at other points in book 12 as well, for instance in 12.8. Here again, Quintilian maintains that the patron’s learning makes him superior to others: *Nam quis discet tam bene quam patronus?* (12.8.4: “For who will apprehend [the case] as well as the patron?”). The patron should not limit himself to reading summaries written by the litigator or some juridical expert.⁴³² Quintilian portrays clients and jurists as individuals who admit that they are not able to take the patron’s role and (like philosophers) did not undergo his training to support the point that he should do without their help. Bad patrons just skip the process of gathering information,

⁴²⁷ See Winterbottom 2005, 180. See on the positive representation of old age in Cicero’s *De senectute* and its political background Fuà 1995, 196. See Atherton 1998, 216 on what Crassus says at *De or.* 1.33, and on linguistic training setting the orator apart from the ‘natural’ state of children and those lacking education.

⁴²⁸ See comparatively Amaya 2013, 16 on the value of exemplars in modern legal practice. See *Inst.* 5.11.5-6 on *exemplum* as the third of three types of technical proofs (introduced at 5.9.1).

⁴²⁹ Compare Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.4: *historia quoquo modo scripta delectat*.

⁴³⁰ Dihle 1971, 37 argues that Tacitus’ formula of detachment is adopted from Epicureanism and compares the (ideally) detached situation of the historian to that of the Epicurean gods.

⁴³¹ Woodman 1988, 75-83 argues that Antonius allows also for factual additions, next to stylistic embellishment. See Walzer 2003, 220 on the stylistic qualities required from a good historical narrative in Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.

⁴³² Compare Columella, *Rust.* 1.2.2 on how the landowner should, according to Cato, know himself what must be done, instead of just trusting the bailiff.

that is, *inuentio* (12.8.5). But instead of believing the information provided by the client, a good patron should question him. For “Most [litigants] also lie, and, as if they were not presenting, but defending their cause, they speak as if not with the patron, but with the judge.” (12.8.9: *Plurimi etiam mentiuntur, et tamquam non doceant causam sed agant non ut cum patrono sed ut cum iudice locuntur*).⁴³³ Like a good doctor, the orator should strive to see not only what is obvious, but also what is hidden (12.8.8; 10); the medical comparison supports the point that the orator can better evaluate the situation thanks to his knowledge.⁴³⁴ He must engage in as thorough research as possible to avoid unpleasant surprises (like new or faulty evidence on the day of the trial: 12.8.12). Finally, after having acted as an “opponent” (*aduersarius*) to the client (12.8.8), he should imagine himself in the position of the judge:

... deinceps personam induat iudicis, fingatque apud se agi causam, et quod ipsum mouisset de eadem re pronuntiaturum id potentissimum apud quemcumque agetur existimet. (*Inst.* 12.8.15)

“... next, let him put on the judge’s mask, and imagine that the case is being tried before him, and consider that what would have moved him himself when he was about to pronounce on the same matter will be the most powerful argument for the one before whom it will be tried.”

Unlike the client, who overlooks or distorts details, the orator has the power to learn the facts quickly and thoroughly. His training has improved his cognitive abilities. Furthermore, since he is not directly involved in the case he can evaluate it from a detached position, (supposedly) without any bias – like a historian.⁴³⁵ Metaphors of sight pervade the chapter, supporting the impression that the orator has the power to perceive things more clearly.⁴³⁶

Forensic victory is the chief goal of the orator’s activity. Quintilian underlines this at the start of the following chapter (12.9, on how to lead cases), again setting his stance against the background of bad practice: *Ante omnia ne, quod plerisque accidit, ab utilitate eum causae praesentis cupido laudis abducat* (12.9.1: “First of all, a desire for praise should not distract him from what is useful for the present cause – which happens to most people”). The relative clause hints at a polemic present throughout the *Institutio*: Quintilian criticises contemporary orators for striving for praise, not victory (§4.1.1-3). A good orator will gain recognition through his activity, praise is not what he should focus on: *si unum sit ex duobus eligendum, causa potius laudetur quam patronus* (12.9.6: “if one would have

⁴³³ Dozier 2014, 75-76 interprets this depiction of a teaching-learning relationship between client and patron as an invitation to read the *Institutio* itself sceptically.

⁴³⁴ See Gibson 2013, 530 on the ambivalent depiction of doctors in declamation as selfless and competent professionals on the one hand, as potential poisoners on the other. See for doctor-comparisons in the *Institutio* Abfahl 1932, 50.

⁴³⁵ See Antonius’ remarks at Cic. *De or.* 2.102 about playing his own, the adversary’s and the judge’s role when questioning the client. Compare Habinek 2004, 21-22 on how Demosthenes constructs an *ethos* for himself as an analytical spectator of events.

⁴³⁶ Metaphors of sight pervade the chapter: 12.8.10 (*aspiciat*); 12.8.12 (*intueri, uidere*); 12.8.13 (*circumspectare*); 12.8.15 (*perscrutatus, ante oculos*).

to choose between the two, the case itself should be praised rather than the patron”). Furthermore, the orator should not be fastidious in choosing cases: *Nec illo fastidio laborabit orator non agendi causas minores, tamquam infra eum sint aut detractura sit opinioni minus liberalis materia* (12.9.7: “And the orator should not be affected by that squeamishness of not conducting minor cases, as if they were beneath him or as if a less liberal subject-matter will diminish his reputation”). He should be down-to-earth and concerned with his clients, not with himself. This recalls Quintilian’s criticism at 1 *pr.* 4 of those teachers who leave out preliminary studies because it will not contribute to their reputation (§1.2). A good orator, like a good teacher, will not be self-interested.

The idea that the orator’s long training makes him ready to face any new situation is reiterated in the final paragraph of this chapter, the last on forensic activity, a prominent position underlining its importance:

Sed siue in respondendo fuerit subito dicendum, siue quae alia ita exegerit ratio, non oppressum se ac deprellum credet orator cui disciplina et studium et exercitatio dederit uires etiam facilitatis: quem armatum semper ac uelut in procinctu stantem non magis umquam in causis oratio quam in rebus cotidianis ac domesticis sermo deficiet, nec se umquam propter hoc oneri subtrahet, modo sit causae discendae tempus: nam cetera semper sciet. (Inst. 12.9.20-21)

“But whether he will have to speak immediately in a reply, or if some other circumstance will require it so, the orator to whom discipline and effort and training have given also the powers of fluency will not feel that he is cornered or caught by surprise: speech will never desert him, who will always be armed and always stand in active service, as it were, in cases as little as in daily and private matters – nor will he because of this ever avoid the burden, if he only has time to apprehend the case: for everything else he will always know.”

The orator’s learning is not desirable for its own sake, but because it supports him in his forensic activity: his thorough training equips him for every occasion. The comparison of the orator to a soldier once again gives the impression that he is a man of action. Furthermore, a linear reader may remark that the orator does not avoid the burden, just as Quintilian in 1 *pr.* 2-4 did not refuse to set *plus ... oneris* onto his shoulders. Retrospectively, it appears that Quintilian, taking up his great task, was just doing what a well-prepared orator should do, dutifully, on any occasion.

Overall, it appears that Quintilian emphasises that a good orator is characterized by his thorough training and general knowledge, which will allow him to understand any case better and faster than anyone else. Consistent hard work is the key to his success. His enhanced cognitive ability, resulting from his training, and his knowledge of the past (real or fictional) prematurely give him an authority surpassing his actual age. This supports Quintilian’s own didactic project. For why should anyone work

through the twelve books of the *Institutio*, if he could simply skip the laborious educational process it proposes? At the same time, it is underlined that this training should not be pursued for its own sake, but aim at a concrete, real-life goal: forensic speaking. Studies not translated into action are futile.⁴³⁷

This drawing of the orator as a man of ‘action’ has direct repercussions on the appearance of Quintilian as a didactic figure. Stressing the direct usefulness of the training he proposes, he marks his distance from teachers with no experience of forensic activity. Conversely, certain features of the orator as he draws him agree with his own persona as a didactic writer. Most obviously, Quintilian writes his work in retirement as he recommends, but also the orator’s historian-like proceeding when evaluating a case is not too different from his own mission to judge earlier literature. These parallels between the portrayal of the orator and his self-representation support his claim to didactic authority on the grounds of his practical experience.

3.2.2 ‘The Style is the Man’

The presentation of the ideal orator as a man of ‘action’ is not confined to book 12. To use a metaphor Quintilian employs when advising readers to insert into *narratio* hints at the actual argument following in *argumentatio*, he scatters “some seeds” (*Inst.* 4.2.54: *semina quaedam*) of it throughout the work.⁴³⁸ The most prominent instances of this ‘sowing’ can be found in his discussion of *elocutio*. As we will see, he stresses that “things” or contents (*res*) are more important than “words” (*uerba*) and describes good style through bodily and fight imagery. This prepares the ground for his portrayal of the orator as a man of action – one who is not concerned with words, but is “doing things with words”.⁴³⁹ I have argued above that Quintilian at 11.1.30 rephrases Sen. *Ep.* 114.1 (§2.2.2). Now, I will suggest that the use of military metaphors for both the orator’s style and his activity supports the idea that ‘the style is the man’; in Buffon’s words, “le style est l’homme même”.⁴⁴⁰

Quintilian starts his discussion of *elocutio* by emphasising its difficulty (see §1.2.1) and underpinning its importance through a military simile:

Eloqui enim [hoc] est omnia quae mente conceperis promere atque ad audientis perferre, sine quo superuacua sunt priora et similia gladio condito atque intra uaginam suam haerenti. (Inst. 8 pr. 15)

⁴³⁷ Compare *Inst.* 12.5.2; 12.6.4-5.

⁴³⁸ Similarly, at *Inst.* 3.6.61 we are told that Hermagoras used a metaphor the “seeds” (*semina*) of which were already present in Aristotle.

⁴³⁹ As Classen 1965, 183 writes, Quintilian’s thematization of the orator’s good character throughout the work is a prelude to his definition at *Inst.* 12.1.1.

⁴⁴⁰ Buffon 1894, 43. See Habinek 2004, 65-66 on the anxiety over the masculinity of the free citizen that confirms his status and raises him above the rest of society, and how it is supported by the gendered descriptions of style.

“To engage in *elocutio* means bringing forth all what you have conceived of in your mind and to bring it across to listeners; without which all the previous [steps] are useless and like a sword hidden and stuck inside its sheath.”

Invention and disposition and all knowledge are useless, if not properly communicated to the audience.⁴⁴¹ Following the simile, they constitute the sword, but *elocutio* is what draws it out of the sheath, activating its power. Quintilian adds that *elocutio* is the domain requiring the most effort, in which “foremost, one orator is more powerful than another” (8 pr. 16: *maxime orator oratore praestantior*). Stylistic currents, Quintilian adds, are also characterised by different elocution; he explains this by referring to Asianists and orators “whom we call the dry ones” (*quos aridos uocamus*), that is, Atticists: the former lacked “judgement” (*iudicium*) and “moderation” (*modus*), the latter “force” (8 pr. 17: *uires*).⁴⁴² This reference to the Asianism-Atticism debate ties back to the mention of Cicero, but it is brief and marginal compared to the ensuing opposition of good style to two currents of corrupt contemporary style, which I will discuss later (§§4.2.1-3). Furthermore, the past tense implies that this is a controversy Quintilian acknowledges but relegates to the past (see 12.10.12-19; §2.2.3). The sword simile and the reference to the debate highlight two things: *elocutio* matters, but one should give it neither too much nor too little attention. He reinforces this point by adding that ornament is beautiful “when it is strived for to a reasonable extent, not excessively” (8 pr. 18: *cum sequitur, non cum adfectatur*). Excess appears as the greater danger. A bodily allegory strengthens the point:

Corpora sana et integri sanguinis et exercitatione firmata ex isdem his speciem accipiunt ex quibus uires, namque et colorata et adstricta et lacertis expressa sunt. Curam ergo uerborum, rerum uolo esse sollicitudinem. (Inst. 8 pr. 19-20)

“Bodies which are healthy, of sound blood and shaped by exercise draw their good looks from the same source as their strength, for they are of good complexion, firm, and have defined muscles. I want there to be carefulness regarding words, concern regarding contents.”

This weighting is consistent with the devaluation of (philosophers’) words as opposed to (orators’) contents and actions. The allegory of a healthy, muscular body implies a congruence between the surface (the rosy skin, the words) and what is beneath it (the muscles, the contents). Furthermore, it shows the importance of training: an athletic body is achieved through consistent training – just the sort

⁴⁴¹ Cf. similarly *Inst.* 5.14.29 on the need not only to teach, but also to please and move the audience to be successful; an elaborate fluvial comparison makes the point, foreshadowing its use at 12.10.58-65 in the discussion of the three styles of oratory.

⁴⁴² Cf. for this metaphor for the Atticists’ style *Inst.* 12.10.13-14; Abfahl 1932, 14 points to Tac. *Dial.* 18.9 (*Calvus exsanguis et aridus*). Cicero only uses *aridus* for style once, but for Stoic orators, not Atticists: *De or.* 2.159 (*exile, aridum, concisum ac minutum*); compare 3.66 on Stoics not being made for public oratory.

of commitment which Quintilian requires of his students (see §§2.1.2; 3.2.1). Striving for flashy *elocutio* without having previously engaged in *inuentio* and *dispositio* and generally in serious study would be like wanting to have the sculpted body of the athlete without working out. No training, no muscles, no good looks; the latter are incidental, just as applause is incidental to victory (§3.2.1).⁴⁴³ Another bodily allegory follows:

Maiore animo adgredienda eloquentia est, quae si toto corpore ualet, unguis polire et capillum reponere non existimabit ad curam suam pertinere. (Inst. 8 pr. 22)

“Eloquence must be approached with a greater spirit; if it is healthy in its whole body, it will not care about polishing its nails and coiffing its hair.”

The double significance of *ualere* as both ‘being healthy’ and ‘being strong’ suits the context: as the previous allegory made clear, strength makes for healthily rosy cheeks.⁴⁴⁴ The characterization of good style as a trained body which does not need to care about fingernails and haircare for good looks implies that an excessive attention to details is unnecessary. The physical imagery and the argument recall a statement of Crassus in the *De oratore*:

Ornatur igitur oratio genere primum et quasi colore quodam et suco suo ... non est singulorum articulorum; in toto spectantur haec corpore. (Cic. De or. 3.96)

“Therefore, speech is adorned firstly through its genre, and as it were through its colour and juice ... it is not a matter of single limbs; these things are seen in the whole body.”

Quintilian’s passage may be said to expand on Cicero’s: the generic “limbs” have been concretized into fingernails and hair. Furthermore, the idea that a manly toilette should refrain from excessive care recalls advice given at Ov. *Ars am.* 1.513-22: the lover should take care of dress, hair, and hygiene, but anything else is for girls and men who are not ‘real men’:

*Cetera lasciuae faciant, concede, puellae
et siquis male uir quaerit habere uirum. (Ov. Ars am. 1.523-24)*

⁴⁴³ Lucian uses a similar comparison to make the same point for historiography: it can be pleasant, but this is only incidental to its actual goal, which is the presentation of truth: *Hist. conscr.* 9. Compare Sen. *Dial.* 7.8.1 on *voluptas* being incidental to *virtus*, and similarly *Ep.* 79.13 on glory automatically following virtue.

⁴⁴⁴ OLD *ualeo* 1 and 2. Compare the description at Cic. *Brut.* 262 (cited at Suet. *Iul.* 56.2) of Caesar’s style as an upright, naked body. For excessive haircare betraying effeminacy see e.g. Mart. 7.58.1-2. See Fantham 1972, 164-65 on Cicero’s use of imagery of bodies and combat for oratory (particularly prominently in *De or.* 2.318ff.); cf. also *Rhet. Her.* 4.18.

“Allow lascivious girls to do the rest,
and any half-baked man who wants to have a man.”

Whether the Ovidian passage is in play or not, the thought (literal in Ovid, metaphorical in Quintilian) is the same: refinement requires care, but there is only a fine line separating refinement from excess, and excess is effeminate; and of course, effeminate equals bad.⁴⁴⁵ Nevertheless, refinement is needed to sway a girl or the crowd. The lover and the orator must make concessions to their target’s wish for pleasing ornament, but simultaneously gauge just how much of it does not endanger their masculinity.

Stylistic ‘masculinity’, then, is achieved by devoting the ‘right’, that is, moderate amount of effort to ornament (whatever that means exactly).⁴⁴⁶ The connected notion that contents are more important than words is reiterated in the penultimate paragraph of the preface to book 8:

Sit igitur cura elocutionis quam maxima, dum sciamus tamen nihil uerborum causa esse faciendum, cum uerba ipsa rerum gratia sint reperta. (Inst. 8 pr. 32)

“Let the care of elocution therefore be as great as possible, as long, however, as we keep in mind that nothing should be done for the sake of words, as the words themselves are found for the sake of the contents.”

Ornament must primarily be useful – for rhetorical combat, and combat is a prerogative of ‘real’ men.⁴⁴⁷ The reiteration of this thought, as often in the *Institutio*, shows its importance.

After this preface, Quintilian structures his discussion of *elocutio* after three main qualities of speech, first introduced at 1.5.1: “correctness” (*Latinitas*: 1.5-6; 8.1), “clarity” (*perspicuitas*: 8.2) and “ornament” (*ornatus*: 8.3-9.4).⁴⁴⁸ Book 10, devoted to the training of the advanced student, is followed by the chapter on *aptum* (11.1).⁴⁴⁹ The chapter on ornament starts with an affirmation of its importance: speaking correctly and clearly is a necessary premise, but speaking ornately is what an orator should

⁴⁴⁵ See Connolly 1998, 135-36 on the anxiety over the masculinity of oratory originating from the fact that oratory needs to please an audience, which is perceived as unmanly, and how this anxiety is betrayed by metaphors of masculinity vs. effeminacy used to describe rhetorical style.

⁴⁴⁶ Edwards 2019, 285 remarks on the difficulty of pinning down this ‘masculinity’ in Seneca’s usage.

⁴⁴⁷ See Cousin 1967, 413 on the emphasis that Quintilian lays on the necessity of combining ornament with usefulness. As Kennerly 2019, 133 puts it, Quintilian “tries to avoid the formation of a word-chaser”. Cf. also Andersen 1996, 77 about *Inst.* 5.14.32: excessive carefulness may be unduly redolent of the classroom and give the impression of lacking proficiency.

⁴⁴⁸ Cicero employs this subdivision *De or.* 3.37, following Theophrastus without acknowledging him (cf. also *Rhet. Her.* 4.17-69), whereas in the *Orator*, he follows the subdivision into plain, middle and grand style (*Rhet. Her.* 4.11-16, *Orat.* 75-112): see May and Wisse 2001, 35. See Lausberg 1960, 249-50, §§459-60 on these virtues.

⁴⁴⁹ See Atherton 1988, 411-42 on Stoic style, and Walzer 2003, 27 on the Stoic qualities of speech reported in Diog. Laert. 7.59. Arist. *Rh.* 1404b1-2 sets clarity as the most important quality of speech.

strive for (8.3.1).⁴⁵⁰ Invention is shared with the ignorant, disposition can be achieved with little training. What distinguishes an orator is ornament:

Cultu uero atque ornatu se quoque commendat ipse qui dicit, et in ceteris iudicium doctorum, in hoc uerum etiam popularem laudem petit, nec fortibus modo sed etiam fulgentibus armis proeliatur. (Inst. 8.3.2)

“The speaker however also recommends himself through elegance and ornament; and in the other parts [of his oratory] he strives for the judgement of the learned, in this one however also for popular praise, and he fights with weapons which are not only strong, but also shiny.”

Quintilian here reframes the earlier statement (8 *pr.* 16) that elocution is the defining feature of the orator: elocution is most important among the parts of oratory, within elocution itself ornament. While learned men can also judge the other qualities of speech, this is the only one appreciated by the crowd. This explains the earlier comparison of *inuentio* and *dispositio* without *elocutio* with a sword stuck in the sheath: they are ineffective because the public would not appreciate them. The orator must make some effort to suit its tastes. As the military metaphor shows, however, the glitter will be that of weapons – listeners must be carried away, but the ornament needed to do so should not compromise effectiveness of argument. The binding alliteration of *fortibus ... fulgentibus* highlights that argument and ornament must necessarily be joined. The orator could just use strong weapons, but since to be successful he must impress the audience, they must be shiny too. There is an interesting element of anti-popular bias, and perhaps of infantilisation, in play here. The idea that the learned are those whose opinion counts is stated most clearly in the discussion of *Latinitas* (Inst. 1.6). Language is sanctioned by four criteria: *Sermo constat ratione uetustate auctoritate consuetudine* (1.6.1: “Speech is based on reason, antiquity, authority, usage”).⁴⁵¹ *Consuetudo* is set as the most important criterion (1.6.3) and defined as the consensus of the learned: *Ergo consuetudinem sermonis uocabo consensum eruditorum, sicut uiuendi consensus bonorum* (1.6.45: “Therefore, I will call usage what is the consensus of the learned, as of living the consensus of the good”).⁴⁵² Quintilian often claims that his positions are supported by the authority of (anonymous) learned men.⁴⁵³

We find another lengthy formulation of the idea that the opinion of the learned is worth more than that of the broader public at 12.10.73-76. Engaging in polemic against ‘modernist’ style (see

⁴⁵⁰ The same stance is taken by Crassus at *De or.* 3.54: see Fantham 2004, 245.

⁴⁵¹ See Ax 2011, 230-31 on these criteria.

⁴⁵² Colson 1924, 91 points to *Inst.* 12.10.47, *Sen. Controv.* 1. *pr.* 8, *Suet. Ner.* 51 and *Juv.* 6.502. For Fernández López 2003, 36, the notion of the *consensus eruditorum* brings out the partially utopian character of Quintilian’s project, in which matters are ideally settled by well-educated people. Compare *Hor. Sat.* 1.10.87 on preferring a refined audience of *doctos ... amicos* to a wide one.

⁴⁵³ See on the idea that the opinion of the *docti* matters more than that of the *indocti* *Inst.* 8.2.22; 12.10.73-76

§4.2.2), Quintilian criticises those who think that a faulty and corrupted speech is more “popular and likely to win applause” (12.10.73: *populare atque plausibile*). He adds that he neither denies nor is surprised that this kind of style is popular because eloquence is generally a “pleasant and agreeable thing” (12.10.74: *iucunda res ac fauorabilis*).⁴⁵⁴ He adds that the ignorant tend to admire any slightly more choice expression they think is beyond them, but if simultaneously confronted with bad and good style prefer good style. Two textile comparisons make the point. Wool dyed with a cheap colour may seem pretty, but pales if compared to purple (12.10.75). And further, if one applies sharper judgement to these corrupt things, like sulphurs to tinctures, they will shed the colour they pretended to have and pale, becoming inexpressibly ugly (12.10.76).⁴⁵⁵ Another analogy follows, drawn from the animal kingdom: it shines like fireflies when the sun is gone (12.10.76). Quintilian sums up his position thus: *Denique mala multi probant, nemo improbat bona* (12.10.76: “Finally, many approve of bad things, nobody disapproves of good ones”). The message is clear: uneducated cannot judge and are easily impressed, but if simultaneously confronted with something bad and good, they will naturally opt for the latter.⁴⁵⁶

As in the case of the dichotomy constructed between orators and philosophers, the strong opposition, here between the opinion of the learned (worth more) and that of the crowd (worth less) recalls Seneca the Younger, rather than Cicero. Cicero, having to defend himself against allegations that his style is too exuberant, tends to criticise Stoic or Atticist style as too dry and exclusive; a good orator should be able to convince both the learned and the ignorant.⁴⁵⁷ Seneca, instead, for instance at *Ep.* 29.11 states that popular favour is curried by bad arts and that the crowd will only recognise someone who resembles it, or at *Ep.* 102.11-13 that the judgement of *uiri boni* is enough to establish a man’s worth.⁴⁵⁸ Quintilian takes a stance which is similarly exclusive to Seneca’s. What is radically different, however, is that his orator, unlike Lucilius, should not disengage from public duties. He should operate at the heart of the crowd staying unaffected by it, and improve its tastes by presenting it with good oratory. Again, his activity receives a didactic spin. Back to *Inst.* 8.3. Quintilian insists that ornament should be ‘masculine’:

⁴⁵⁴ He adds: *neque aliunde illi per fora atque aggerem circuli*: “which is why we see those groups of listeners in the forum or on the Old Wall”: Russell 2001, vol. 5, 322; Russell points to Juv. 6.588: part of the Servian wall was by Quintilian’s time a promenade, frequented by mountebanks and other people wanting an audience.

⁴⁵⁵ Austin 1948, 75 comments that Mart. 2.41.1 writes that Ovid experimented with hendecasyllables, and that this verse may be drawn from such an epigram. Russell 2001, vol. 5, 323 notes that Laconian purple was considered second only to Tyrian, and that sulphur was used to test dye (Plin. *HN* 35.198).

⁴⁵⁶ Implicit is the notion that men are naturally drawn towards what is best. Quintilian mentions the idea that *semina* of virtue are naturally implanted in men at *Inst.* 2.20.6. Compare Brunt 2013, 17 on Seneca at *Ep.* 29; 94; 31 writing about a natural propensity to virtue which makes it easier to eventually make some moral progress.

⁴⁵⁷ Thus, Cicero argues that Calvus’ failure to sway the crowd speaks against him as an orator (*Brut.* 283).

⁴⁵⁸ See for a similar elitist stance esp. Sen. *Ep.* 7.1; 8.1; 10.1; 14.11; 29.11; 52.11; 102.17. As Gibson 2003, 252 points out, Seneca’s attitude differs from Pliny the Younger’s, who attributes great importance to renown in the public sphere. Compare Petersen 2018, 247-49 on the negative representation of the *plebs* in Tacitus’ works.

Sed hic ornatus (repetam enim) uirilis et fortis et sanctus sit nec effeminatam leuitatem et fuco ementitum colorem amet: sanguine et uiribus niteat. (Inst. 8.3.6)

“But this kind of ornament should be (I repeat it) manly and strong and undefiled and should not love effeminate levity and a complexion faked through make-up: it should shine thanks to blood and strength.”

The contraposition of appearance due to training to make-up is the same as in 8 *pr.* 19. The repetition is, as elsewhere, acknowledged in the parenthesis, stressing the point. Ornament is subordinate to argument. The connexion between appearance and training is reiterated shortly after: the well-trained athlete will both look good and be readier for the fight; “true beauty is never separated from usefulness” (8.3.10: *Numquam uera species ab utilitate diuiditur*). This remark prepares the ground for the ensuing shift from the plane of physical allegory back to that of style:

At ubi res agitur et uera dimicatio est, ultimus sit famae locus. Praeterea ne decet quidem, ubi maxima rerum momenta uersantur, de uerbis esse sollicitum. (Inst. 8.3.13)

“But where the [whole] thing is at stake and there is the real fight, one’s renown should be the last priority. And besides, it is not even fitting to be concerned about words at the most decisive moment.”

Excessive preoccupation with ornament will hinder the orator.⁴⁵⁹ The idea that contents and victory are more important than words and one’s own renown serves as a prelude to the presentation of the orator as concerned with actions rather than words, and victory rather than praise, in book 12 (§3.2.1).

Quintilian’s description of the orator’s appearance in his treatment of *actio* (11.3) betrays the same anxiety about striking the right balance between good looks and masculinity. The advice is parallel to that given for *elocutio*: the tone of voice must be varied and adapted to context. Quintilian cuts short:

Hoc satis est. Alioqui nitida illa et curata uox insolitum laborem recusabit, ut adsueta gymnasiis et oleo corpora, quamlibet sint in suis certaminibus speciosa atque robusta, si militare iter fascemque et uigilias imperes, deficient et quaerant unctores suos nudumque sudorem. (Inst. 11.3.26-27)

⁴⁵⁹ See also *Inst.* 8.6.42, where ornament is compared to an army which, if comprising as many camp-followers as fighters, will be doubled in number, not in strength.

“This is enough. Otherwise, such a clear and cultivated voice will refuse unfamiliar work – like bodies that are used to gymnasia and to oil, however beautiful and strong they may be in their wrestling-fights, will fail if you impose a military march and a bundle and night-watches on them, and ask for their anointers and naked sweat.”

Excessive vocal training will weaken the voice.⁴⁶⁰ The body of an athlete, which had previously symbolized manly style, is contrasted with that of a soldier: the soldier’s strength serves to achieve a concrete end in the real world, the athlete’s is merely for display, to please an audience, and would not last on a military march.⁴⁶¹ Greek wrestling is set against Roman military activity, in line with the opposition between Greek theory and Roman practice discussed above (§3.1.3). Excessive engagement in vocal training, as in any kind of study, is deemed impractical and not conducive to the orator’s primary goal, forensic victory.⁴⁶² The student should also undergo some training with an actor for posture and voice, but not so much as to become effeminate or actor-like; the theatre being traditionally the domain of slaves, a ‘theatrical’ performance would undermine his masculinity and status (11.3.89).⁴⁶³ Similarly, gesture must be polished, but moderately. It should not be ‘soft’, that is, effeminate: *Longissime fugienda mollis actio* (11.3.128: “An effeminate delivery must be given the widest possible berth”).⁴⁶⁴ The orator himself should look good – and masculine. Both excessive care and negligence regarding toga, shoes and hair are reprehensible (11.3.137). Negligence is masculine but unrefined, excessive care refined but effeminate. The physical imagery employed for the orator’s voice and gesture, and the actual description of his appearance, overlap.

The orator must achieve exactly the ‘right’ amount of training and ornament – being careful not to go too far with it. Moderation is explicitly connected with (stylistic) manliness:

Sed et copia habeat modum, sine quo nihil nec laudabile nec salutare est, et nitor ille cultum uirilem et inuentio iudicium. (Inst. 12.10.79)

⁴⁶⁰ Quintilian here could be said to refer the physical literary critical metaphors back to the speaker’s actual appearance, as Seneca does with Maecenas, on which see Edwards 2019, 288.

⁴⁶¹ Quintilian’s advice on *actio* is informed by a balancing between the orator’s *grauitas* and the elegance of the actor: see Nocchi 2013, 125. See Habinek 2017, 291 on Cicero’s awareness of the overlaps between the activity of the orator and of the actor or singer. For Manzoni 2017, 103, Quintilian seems to make a less rigid differentiation between actor and orator than Cicero at *De or.* 3.214.

⁴⁶² See Gleason 1995, 106; 113; 118-19 on Cicero warning against speaking like an actor (*De or.* 1.59) and emphasising the greater manliness of the orator (*Orat.* 59), and on the gender-consciousness characterizing Quintilian’s views on voice and performance: he distinguishes between the vocal practice of singers or actors and that of the orator on the grounds that they are less masculine, and he discredits contemporary rhetorical vocal practice which he dislikes as song-like and effeminate.

⁴⁶³ Compare *Inst.* 2.10.15, and already 1.8.2 on the young child’s practice of reading aloud, *lectio*. See Tac. *Hist.* 3.62.2 on Fabius Valens striving for a reputation of urbanity through wantonness and acting in mimes under Nero.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. *De or.* 3.41-42, where a *mollis vox aut muliebris* is contrasted to one that is *rustica et agrestis*; both extremes must be avoided. But see also on Quintilian’s Horatian stance regarding invective that weakness, *mollitia*, can sometimes be useful Dozier 2015, 322.

“But also copiousness should have moderation, without which nothing is praiseworthy or healthy, and that brilliance should entail a manly care, and invention judgement.”

Next to the orator’s style and appearance, also the genre itself of oratory is described through military imagery. Before embarking on the overview of authors, Quintilian distinguishes rhetoric from poetry, historiography, and philosophy.⁴⁶⁵ He starts with poetry:

Meminerimus tamen non per omnia poetas esse oratori sequendos, nec libertate uerborum nec licentia figurarum: genus ostentationi comparatum ... nos uero armatos stare in acie et summis de rebus decernere et ad uictoriam niti. Neque ego arma squalere situ ac robigine uelim, sed fulgorem in iis esse qui terreat, qualis est ferri ... non qualis auri argentique, inbellis et habenti periculosus. (Inst. 10.1.28-30)

“We shall however remember that poets should not be followed by the orator in everything, neither regarding the boldness of vocabulary nor the licence of figures: it is a genre devised for display ... but that we stand armed in a battle-order and decide about the greatest things and strive for victory. Nor would I want the weapons to be covered in dirt and rust, but to possess a terrifying splendour, like that of iron ... not of gold and silver, that is unwarlike and dangerous for the one holding it.”

As Irene Peirano Garrison has shown, the expression *Neque squalere situ ac robigine uelim* recalls Verg. *G.* 1.493-97, where a future farmer is pictured who, in the peaceful countryside, finds the arms of the civil wars are found lying unused and covered “in rust” (*robigine*).⁴⁶⁶ As often, there is little exact lexical overlap between Quintilian’s passage and the one he alludes to, but meaning and relevance in Quintilian’s ‘host’ passage indicate that he is alluding to the *Georgics*. He evokes the image of peacefulness only to negate it in a differentiation between poetry and rhetoric, overturning the meaning of the intertext: the rusty weapons here are not a desirable symbol of future peace, but show one extreme which rhetorical style should avoid.⁴⁶⁷ It should neither be careless and ‘rusty’, nor excessively polished like precious metals. Military imagery similarly differentiates between rhetoric and historiography:

⁴⁶⁵ Austin 1948, 215 points to *Inst.* 12.10.73; 10.2.16 as a similar context, or to 4.2.45; 7.3.17 for this idea of μεσότης. Fantham 1972, 174 discusses this passage as an expression of the typically Roman focus on the strength (rather than beauty) produced by physical training. Different amounts of ornament traditionally characterize the subtle, middle, and grand style, a tripartition Quintilian only discusses at *Inst.* 12.10.58-65. See Harrison 2013, 4 on the Aristotelian generic framework in which Quintilian operates.

⁴⁶⁶ See Peirano Garrison 2019, 125, who also remarks that Verg. *G.* 1.493-97 in turn recalls Catull. 64.42 and points to the historiographical trope of the opposition of shiny but useless and sturdy iron weaponry. Compare Ash 1999, 120 on the dismissive remark of the Iberian king Pharasmenes about the gold-laden Parthian warriors at Tac. *Ann.* 6.34.3. Peterson 1891, 19 only notes that *situs* in Vergil often designates rust or mould. See also *Inst.* 12.5.2 on those prevented from speaking by *uerecundia*.

⁴⁶⁷ The long span of time is emphasised by the image of the empty helmets: see Mynors 1990, 96.

Licet tamen nobis in digressionibus uti uel historico nonnumquam nitore, dum in iis de quibus erit quaestio meminerimus non athletarum toris sed militum lacertis <opus> esse, nec uersicolorem illam qua Demetrius Phalereus dicebatur uti uestem bene ad forensem puluerem facere. (Inst. 10.1.33)

“We may however sometimes use even historiographical splendour in digressions, as long as we remember that, in those parts in which the issue is at stake, we need not the bulky muscles of athletes, but the muscular arms of soldiers, and that the multicoloured dress which Demetrius of Phaleron was said to use is not suitable for the dust of the forum.”

Demetrius serves as an example of a style which is too ‘historical’. The same opposition between the palaestra and real, military weapons is made in the evaluation of his style at Cic. *Brut.* 37.⁴⁶⁸ While Cicero draws a link between the political circumstances and Demetrius’ style, Quintilian as often obliterates any political implications, connecting his style to historiographical writing. As with poetry, the imagery focuses on the appearance, one could say on the aesthetics, of the fight: there shiny weapons, here bulky physiques.⁴⁶⁹ More insistence is applied to the warning not to fall into a historiographical mode than into poetry.⁴⁷⁰ About philosophy, we read:

Sed his quoque adhibendum est simile iudicium, ut etiam cum in rebus uersemur isdem, non tamen eandem esse condicionem sciamus litium ac disputationum, fori et auditorii, praeceptorum et periculorum. (Inst. 10.1.36)

“But to these things as well we need to apply similar judgement, so as to know that, even if we are concerned with the same matters, the conditions are not the same in legal cases as in [philosophical] debates, in the forum as in the classroom, in teaching as in real danger.”

In an asyndetic tricolon, climactically ending with a content-related chiasmus and alliteration, the active life of the orator is contrasted with the philosophers’ theoretical debates, the closed space of the

⁴⁶⁸ See Peterson 1891, 21 and Abfahl 1932, 11; 33 on this opposition. As Fantham 1978, 11 writes, Cic. *Brut.* 37 signals the break with an older rhetorical tradition. See on Cicero’s judgement that Demetrius differs from Demosthenes through this lack of real ‘weapons’ Bishop 2015, 176. Quintilian mentions Demetrius at *Inst.* 2.4.41 as the one first reporting on the exercise of composing mock-forensic speeches (declamations), and at 10.1.80 relates that eloquence is said to have first declined with him. At Cic. *Orat.* 92, Demetrius represents the middle style.

⁴⁶⁹ See on this contrast between the bulky muscles and wiry sinews Hays 1986, 112.

⁴⁷⁰ As Kraus 2013, 419 writes, the two prose genres, being closer to each other, must be distinguished more carefully from oratory than poetry. See Ash 2003, 214-15 on Pliny differentiating between his letter-writing and historiography at *Ep.* 1.1; 6.16.21-22.

auditorium to the open *forum*, real dangers to teachings.⁴⁷¹ This corresponds to the contrast, discussed above, set up between oratory and philosophy. Quintilian singles out oratory: it has an immediate goal (forensic victory), while the other genres aim primarily to please the audience.⁴⁷² Rhetoric itself, then, is defined in terms of masculinity, just as the orator's style, his appearance, and his activity.

What is this masculinity? From the systematic contraposition of good style with two currents of 'corrupt' contemporary oratory (one described as effeminate and too ornate, the other as shaggy and lacking ornament: see §§4.2.1-3), it appears that it is characterised by the 'right' amount of ornament. Moderation defines masculinity, masculinity the orator.⁴⁷³ This may be why Quintilian decided to devote an entire chapter to *aptum* (11.1), why he draws the reader's attention to it by claiming novelty for his treatment, and why he chooses this as one main topic on which to distance himself and his ideal orator from his overbearing model Cicero (see §§2.1.2; 2.2.2). Considering the importance of this chapter, its enjambed (so to say) position may stress its general importance, rather than show that it was just an afterthought to the treatment of elocution.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, as seen above (§2.2.2), Quintilian underlines the importance of aptness for invention and disposition as well. Claiming didactic efficacy for the discussion of aptness ultimately means claiming control over the key notion of masculinity.

The prominent use of metaphors discloses how difficult it is to conceptualise and define the 'right' kind of style. At the same time, setting 'masculinity' as a standard provides Quintilian with a powerful tool to undermine anyone who deviates from his notion of good style, as we will see in the next chapter. Furthermore, his consistent use of bodily and fight imagery to describe oratory itself, the orator's style and appearance, and his forensic activity supports the presentation of the orator as a man of 'action'. For the good orator appears as the one who lives up to the very definition of oratory, a soldier ready for forensic 'battle'. He "does things with words", his speeches have consequences as real as a soldier's blow. This is what differentiates him from philosophers and others, whose speaking is (purportedly) apolitical and confined to schools. As for Quintilian, his own past forensic experience and his endeavour to form such a manly orator single him out from the kind of teachers Cicero ridicules: he does not keep students in his school forever, but creates independent adults. One could perhaps add that he 'does things with metaphors': the imagery he employs has a concrete effect on his

⁴⁷¹ This differentiation of rhetoric from other genres recalls Cic. *Orat.* 64, on which see Fantham 1972, 138. See, differently, Crassus' statement at *De or.* 1.70 that the orator is like the poet insofar as he can speak about everything.

⁴⁷² See on this functional differentiation, and on historiography sharing its aim to please with poetry, Ax 1990, 137-38; 149. At Cic. *De or.* 2.94, oratory is singled out as the genre concerned with real life: see Fantham 1978, 112. This conception of literature differs from post-Romantic conceptions of literature as writing detached from context and function: Culler 2000, 26.

⁴⁷³ Culinary metaphors also are also employed to advocate moderation and variety, e.g. for stylistic ornament at *Inst.* 9.2.72; 9.3.4; 9.3.27, for jokes at 6.3.19; 6.3.27. See Aßfahl 1932, 29f. for an overview. See Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 502-3 on precedents for this invitation to moderation (esp. Arist. *Poet.* 1458a34ff., *Rh.* 1404b18ff.; 1406a10-18, Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 19.2, Isocr. 13.7, *Rhet. Her.* 4.32; 4.38; 4.42, Cic. *De or.* 3.39). For the culinary metaphor, they refer to Cic. *De or.* 2.271 (on jokes), and Arist. *Rh.* 1406a 18-20 (on style).

⁴⁷⁴ As Schneider 1983, 111 seems to think ("das *aptum*-Kapitel ... wirkt wie ein verspäteter Nachtrag").

conceptualisation of the orator. Overall, its consistent use creates the impression of a correspondence between the oratory itself, the orator's style, and his activity: the style is the man.

3.2.3 Defusing Moral Issues

We have seen that Quintilian follows Cicero in circumventing philosophical criticism of rhetoric by requiring knowledge from the orator (§3.1.1) and portrays the orator as a good man, whose morality is proven through his public activity (§3.2.2). However, this is not quite the full story. Repeatedly in the *Institutio*, we find remarks implying that rhetorical activity may in fact be perceived as violent and not always honourable.⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, Quintilian mentions some famous *delatores* but glosses over their prosecutions, not unlike what he does with the political engagement of philosophers (§3.1.3). This obscuring of the violent side of their activity does not have to mean that Quintilian 'the man' was oblivious of contemporary reality, but that within the work, he carefully steers clear of topics which are politically thorny (as seen regarding Cicero's death: §2.2.3) or could undermine his portrayal of the orator.

I have suggested that the orator in the *Institutio* "does things with words", and that Quintilian himself may be said to 'do things with metaphors' through his consistent use of imagery. The latter suggestion may be supported by two programmatic passages in which Quintilian argues against the view that oratory is bad, held, as he claims, by some. At *Inst.* 2.16.6, he ridicules their argument by adducing various things which are good or neutral per se but can sometimes be dangerous. After magistrates, medicine, wisdom, food, and roofs, and before fire, water, sun, and moon, he lists the sword: *non fabricetur militi gladius; potest uti eodem ferro latro* ("let's not produce a sword for a soldier; a robber can use the same weapon").⁴⁷⁶ Setting the sword between things which are essential to human life, he undermines the idea that one should, or even could, ban it altogether. The differentiation between robber and soldier returns at *Inst.* 12.1.1: *pessime mereamur de rebus humanis si latroni comparamus haec arma, non militi* ("we shall render humanity a terrible service if we supply these weapons to a robber, not to a soldier"). The robber's violence is illegitimate, the soldier's is legitimate; real rhetoric requires the orator to be good. This differentiation may be said to signal an awareness that the fight metaphors used to describe the orator's activity are open to interpretation and could be read as advertising rhetorical potency disconnected from ethical considerations.⁴⁷⁷ Quintilian clarifies his position (twice!) and asserts his authority over readers' reception of his text. This concern is typical: we have already encountered it at 1 *pr.* 7 (§1.1.2) and 2.15.4 (on Isocrates: §3.1.1) and will see it again in his discussion of Seneca the Younger (§4.1.1).

⁴⁷⁵ Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, xxxvii write that Quintilian "feels a need to press the idea of the orator as a good man". Natali 1995, 177 argues that Quintilian's definition of oratory is apologetic in character.

⁴⁷⁶ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 287; they point to *Inst.* 3.2.2 for the fabrication of the sword, and to 12.1.1; 2.15.32 for the opposition *miles-latro*.

⁴⁷⁷ As Leidl 2003, 47 writes, metaphors can give way to ambiguities which may give opportunities for polemical distortion.

The question whether the useful (*utile*) or the honourable (*honestum*) should prevail, should they clash, is thematized particularly regarding deliberative oratory (3.8) and appropriateness (11.1). In the latter chapter, Quintilian argues that the two usually coincide, but admits that they may sometimes be in conflict, in which case one should choose the honourable (11.1.8).⁴⁷⁸ He lists Socrates, Scipio Africanus and P. Rutilius as men who did so (11.1.10-13). About both Socrates (11.1.10) and the two Romans (11.1.13) he remarks that their decision brought them future fame. Antonius, when characterising the good orator, at Cic. *De or.* 1.228-31 mentions the cases of Socrates and Rutilius. Quintilian adds Scipio, giving the list a more Roman focus (in accord with his claim that *exempla* are generally Roman, not Greek: 12.2.30; §3.2.1) and names the quality Antonius only exemplifies (aptness), determining its place within his didactic construct.⁴⁷⁹ Any orator facing such a dilemma should opt for the honourable, a choice made palatable by the prospect of fame.

Regarding concrete points of teaching, Quintilian's stance can be less idealistic. For instance, he argues that the orator may sometimes have to lie: his superior insight allows him to discern what should be done for the sake of the *communis utilitas* (3.7.25: "common benefit").⁴⁸⁰ Similarly, discussing *propositio*, the summary of one's position sometimes preceding argumentation, he writes:

...fallendus est iudex et uariis artibus subeundus. Nam est nonnumquam dura propositio, quam iudex si prouidit non aliter praeformidat quam qui ferrum medici prius quam curetur aspexit. (*Inst.* 4.5.5)

"... the judge must be deceived and outwitted through various ruses. For sometimes, the proposition is unfavourable; the judge, if he foresees it, is afraid of it just as someone who has seen the doctor's scalpel before being operated upon."

The orator is likened to the surgeon, the judge to the patient.⁴⁸¹ The implication of setting the judge (not the client) in the position of the patient is that the orator, like a doctor, pursues an intent that will benefit the recalcitrant judge. The option that the client may be guilty, and his acquittal be against the community's interest, is not considered. Through the imagery Quintilian effectively justifies lies and deflects the attention from the fact that his own advice could be seen as problematic.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ See Cic *De or.* 1.141; 2.44. Compare Plut. *Dem.* 12.4 on Demosthenes' speeches being written with what is good in mind; similarly Cic. 13.1.

⁴⁷⁹ See Livy, 38.50-53, Gell. *NA* 4.18; 6.19. Sen. *Ep.* 67.7 names Regulus, Cato the Younger, Rutilius and Socrates as exemplars of honourable behaviour.

⁴⁸⁰ See on this Adamietz 1966, 167. Lana 1990, 296 argues that this is a way of preserving the orator's morality in face of the constrictions imposed by the Principate; if the state is the source of morality, the orator cannot be blamed for doing the emperor's will.

⁴⁸¹ Similarly *Inst.* 12.1.38, on which see Abfahl 1932, 24.

⁴⁸² Arousing emotions is openly recommended to distract the judge from the actual subject matter (*Inst.* 4.5.6).

The effort to strike a balance between the useful and the honourable is particularly evident in the chapter on laughter (*Inst.* 6.3). As already mentioned, Quintilian warns that jokes should do no irreparable damage to an opponent's dignity (§2.2.2). He first advertises the power of laughter to dissolve sad emotions (6.3.1), which he proves through an anecdote in which some Tarentine youths deflate King Pyrrhus' anger against them through a joke (6.3.10).⁴⁸³ The joke plays on surprise and incongruity. Of the three types of jokes Quintilian identifies – *ridicula ex aliis*: 6.3.35-81, *ex nobis*: 6.3.82-83, *ex rebus mediis*: 6.3.84-92 – it corresponds to the third. This type of non-aggressive jokes is praised as the best one (6.3.84). However, the structure of the chapter tells a different story: Quintilian devotes only 9 paragraphs to jokes drawn *ex rebus mediis*, as opposed to the 46 to those drawn *ex aliis*, aggressively undermining someone else. This discrepancy between programmatic statements and practice indicates that aggressive jokes are, ultimately, more useful to the orator: while relaxing the audience's spirits may make the audience well-disposed, undermining the adversary by exposing him as stupid is a very powerful tactic (see §2.2.2). This is a neat example of how Quintilian, while downplaying philosophical criticism of rhetoric and insisting that the orator is a good man, also allows for strategies which may be seen as unethical. One could read this wavering between ideal (the orator is a good man) and reality (forensic reality being inherently aggressive) as a proleptic strategy to assuage sceptical readers who may ask how the fight imagery and the encouragement to strive for forensic victory can be reconciled with the orator's purportedly required good character. Occasionally admitting to potential issues, Quintilian can defuse them by setting them in a forgiving light and lend credibility to himself as a decent man of real-life experience.

Two further issues Quintilian addresses together in *Inst.* 12.7 are whether the orator should engage in prosecution and accept payment. Given the Early Imperial context he writes in, this is likely to entail a nod at the activities of the *delatores*. Some of them rose to wealth and influence under the protection of Imperial power, and our (hostile) senatorial sources, most importantly Tacitus, point out their lowly origins and greed.⁴⁸⁴ Concerning prosecution, Quintilian says that the orator will occasionally engage in it “desiring not the punishment of the guilty, but to amend vices and correct morals” (12.7.2: *non poenae nocentium cupidus sed emendandi uitia corrigendique mores*). Again, we see that the orator's activity is attributed a didactic side: he will teach the young and improve not only the community's tastes through his style (§1.2.1, 3.2.2), but also its morality by enforcing the laws.⁴⁸⁵ Regarding moneymaking, Quintilian as often is more radical in a programmatic passage, less so when

⁴⁸³ Compare Cic. *De or.* 2.340 on the power of a joke to lift the spirits.

⁴⁸⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.3 on the *praemia delatorum*; see on this Petersen 2018, 392. Rutledge 1999, 556 argues for an essential continuity in the perception of prosecutors as violent between Republic and Early Empire, and cautions that due to the hostility of our sources to the *delatores* it is difficult to accurately judge their style. Rutledge 2007, 114 argues that Tac. *Ann.* 1.74.1-2 shows how the *delatores* are constructed as a negative type ultimately based on class and political biases.

⁴⁸⁵ Compare *Inst.* 3.2.2 on prosecution coming before defence. See Scarano Ussani 2003, 298 on the orator as a corrector of vices. Compare Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 55 on the usefulness of prosecutors, if they act honourably, in a society because they uphold its rules, and *Mur.* 56 on their harmfulness if they act out of self-interest. Compare Sen. *Dial.* 2.12.3 on the wise man punishing bad people not because he is offended, but because they are doing wrong.

considering the orator's actual activity. At 1.12.16-7, he distances himself from readers asking about the money one can make from rhetorical training (§3.1.1). At 12.7.8, he remarks that while extortionate fees are unacceptable, there is nothing wrong in requiring moderate payment.⁴⁸⁶ This could be read as a gentlemanly distancing from a concern with money as the domain of socially inferior individuals, and perhaps as a self-defence from rumours about his own wealth.⁴⁸⁷

Concerning both prosecution and moneymaking, Quintilian, true to his persona as a balanced man, advertises his moderate stance. His position on *delatores* is difficult to pin down. He uses the word *delator* only twice. At 3.10.3, discussing different types of judicial cases, he touches upon the “comparative kind” (*genus ... comparativum*). He writes that it may occur within a case to decide which of two heirs should inherit, as a stand-alone case to choose a speaker “and sometimes among *delatores*, [to determine] which of the two earned the prize money” (*et nonnumquam inter delatores, uter praemium meruerit*). Within his treatment of irony, Quintilian refers to his defence of a woman accused of having counterfeited her husband's will and thus being in the tricky situation of having to protect both life and inheritance. He motivates his decision to resort to irony thus:

Ita ergo fuit nobis agendum ut iudices illud intellegent factum, delatores non possent adprehendere ut dictum, et contigit utrumque. (Inst. 9.2.74)

“I therefore had to perform in such a way that the judges would understand what had happened, the *delatores* could not seize on it as having been said, and I managed to do both.”

Here, as in 3.10.3, the *delatores* are characterized by their concern with money.⁴⁸⁸ However, Quintilian neither dwells on their activity nor expresses a value judgement. He lays the focus on his successful employment of irony, once again showcasing his proficiency to readers.

When mentioning two *delatores* of the recent past whom Tacitus judges with great harshness, Vibius Crispus and Domitius Afer, Quintilian omits their engagement in prosecution.⁴⁸⁹ Regarding

⁴⁸⁶ For Brunt 2013b, 178, who points to Vitruvius *De arch.* 6 pr. 5 for comparison, Quintilian's stance here corresponds to the Greek tendency to treat fees as gifts. Plutarch writes that Cato was reported to have performed legal services in the surroundings of Rome μισθορνίας καθαρὸν (*Cat. mai.* 1.5: “clear of”, or perhaps even “unsoiled by”, “wages”); he similarly says that Cicero surprised contemporaries by not accepting wages (*Cic.* 7.3) and positively contrasts him with Demosthenes on this point (*Cic.* 52.5-6).

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Juv. 7.186 and Whitton 2019, 27 on Plin. *Ep.* 4.11.1-2. Compare Mart. 7.64.1-2 on a barber having become a knight thanks to his patroness. Loth 1898, 40, while praising Quintilian's stance on payment as noble, already points out that his theory seems to contradict his practice, since we know that he amassed considerable wealth. Quintilian may have been made particularly receptive to this problem by his knowledge of Seneca the Younger's career, who was criticised for his riches: see esp. Sen. *Dial.* 7.17.2, Tac. *Ann.* 13.42.3-4. See on the latter passage Petersen 2018, 467.

⁴⁸⁸ See on the juridical situation Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 434.

⁴⁸⁹ See Tac. *Hist.* 2.10.1-3, where Vibius Crispus prosecutes Annius Faustus for his delatorial activity under Nero, but the authorial voice comments that this case left an ambiguous aftertaste because the senators remembered that Crispus had led the same kind of cases. See on this passage and on Crispus' wealth Ash 2007, 102. See on Pliny

Crispus, he always mentions defences and emphasises his elegant and pleasant style.⁴⁹⁰ As Michael Winterbottom writes, he gives a “whitewashed” picture of Crispus, and similarly mentions many defences of Afer, but only one prosecution (6.3.81).⁴⁹¹ Quintilian repeatedly refers to Afer as his teacher and last mentions him in the final chapter of the work. Discussing the orator’s retirement, he regrets that Afer kept speaking in the forum as his powers were fading, exposing himself to pity and ridicule (12.11.3). As often, Quintilian operates with a negative example: Afer’s decline is a powerful argument in favour of retiring while one’s abilities are intact and devoting oneself to teaching and writing. Again, perhaps, Cicero’s evaluation near the end of the *Brutus* may be at play. He writes that Hortensius’ rhetorical powers declined in old age because he stopped engaging in training (*Brut.* 237; §2.2.3).⁴⁹² Like Cicero, Quintilian shows that he avoided his predecessor’s mistake, thus surpassing him: Cicero kept training and improving, Quintilian retired before it was too late, and started writing the *Institutio* instead. His mentions of Afer could be said to both display his piety as a student and to contribute to his Ciceronian self-fashioning.

Quintilian’s request that the orator must be a good man may be an attempt to distance himself from the activity of Early Imperial *delatores*, and to prevent all oratory from being perceived as immoral.⁴⁹³ However, even if Quintilian the man may have disapproved of *delatores*, he is careful not to be too blunt about it. Within the *Institutio*, contemporary philosophers and other didactic figures are a more conspicuous target of polemic. He may have found this both safer and more useful, since they were direct didactic competition. As Italo Lana and others have argued, Quintilian’s stance agrees with Domitian’s harsh policies against philosophers, and it may also be said to gain momentum from it.⁴⁹⁴

the Younger’s invectives against Regulus and how they contribute to his Ciceronian self-fashioning Ash 2014, 213–14. See on the less flattering depiction of Afer in Tacitus Petersen 2018, 433–34.

⁴⁹⁰ *Inst.* 5.13.48; 8.5.15; 10.1.119; 12.10.12. At 10.1.24, Crispus is mentioned with Domitius Afer, Passienus, and Decimus Laelius as having defended Volusenus Capito when Quintilian was a boy. *Juv.* 4.81–83 similarly emphasises Crispus’ *iucunditas*, *Suet. Dom.* 3.1 reports a witticism of his. See on this focus on Crispus’ *iucunditas* Spalding 1798–1816, vol. 2, 384 and Möller 2003, 278–79.

⁴⁹¹ See Winterbottom 1964, 92–94 on this and on the difference between Tacitus’ and Quintilian’s presentations of Afer. One case Quintilian mentions repeatedly (*Inst.* 9.2.20; 9.3.66; 9.4.31) is his defence of Cloatilla: see on it Rogers 1945, 265; 270. One witticism of Afer, reported at 5.10.79 (*ego accusavi uos damnastis*), seems to imply a prosecution, as McDermott and Orentzel 1979, 12 observe.

⁴⁹² Quintilian mentions the relationship between Cicero and Hortensius at *Inst.* 11.3.8.

⁴⁹³ For Goldberg 1987, 359 the *Institutio* “is at heart a defensive work”, reacting to *delatores* like Regulus.

⁴⁹⁴ Lana 1990, 285; Scarano Ussani 2003, 23–24; Walzer 2003, 266. The expulsion is reported at *Tac Agr.* 2.2, *Plin. Ep.* 3.11.1, *Suet. Dom.* 10.3, *Gell. NA* 15.11.4, *Cass. Dio* 67.13.3. Similarly, for Fontán 1998, 251, Quintilian justifies or applauds Domitian’s policy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on Quintilian's didactic goal, the ideal orator whom he strives to create and depicts within his work.

After discussing, in the last chapter, Quintilian's reception of Cicero as a model for rhetorical theory and practice, in the first half of this chapter I addressed the question how Cicero serves as a model for the conception of the ideal orator. I first discussed how Quintilian in programmatic passages claims Cicero as his model for the conception of the ideal orator, but simultaneously adopts a Stoic definition of the ideal orator and of rhetoric (§3.1.1). Then, I showed how he builds a dichotomy between 'acting' orators and 'talking' philosophers to support his un-Ciceronian claim that philosophy should be abolished and 're'-appropriated by orators. I suggested that he may be adopting, and overturning, this dichotomy from Seneca the Younger, perhaps to set himself apart from the teachers Cicero belittles (§3.1.2). Finally, I pointed to his omission of politically active Stoic figures, which is functional to his representation of philosophers as socially irrelevant (§3.1.3).

In the second half of the chapter, I started from the question what it means that orators 'act', and how Quintilian can devalue 'words' versus 'actions' without undermining his own didactic endeavour. First, I showed how in the representation of the orator in the last book of the work, the emphasis consistently lies on his forensic activity. The orator 'acts' insofar as he 'does things' with his forensic speeches, and Quintilian's teaching appears as justified, and different from that of philosophers and other didactic figures, insofar as it is functional to this activity (§3.2.1). Then, I argued that the consistent use of bodily and fight metaphors to describe the orator's style supports this portrayal of the orator, and creates a link between his style and character supporting the impression that 'the style is the man' (§3.2.2). I argued in §2.2.2 that this is a key notion which Quintilian adopts from Seneca the Younger. Finally, I pointed to a few instances betraying a preoccupation with the morality of the orator's activity, and to how Quintilian balances between reality and ideal (§3.2.3).

Overall, I hope to have shown, on the one hand, how Quintilian oscillates between acknowledging Cicero as a model and striving for novelty also in his conception of the ideal orator, and how he reacts to post-Ciceronian, Early Imperial discourses by adopting Stoic and Senecan frameworks, engaging in polemic against other didactic figures, and deliberately omitting (near-)contemporary figures like political philosophers and *delatores* to support his argumentative goal. On the other, how he presents a normative image of the orator ideal he purports to educate, and that his drawing of this orator plays a central role in the construction of his own didactic persona.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Playing with Anachronism? On Present and Past Oratory

Introduction

In my second chapter, I argued that Quintilian in his reception of Cicero balances between deference and claims to innovation, and that his denial that Cicero was the ideal orator, together with the conception of literary history as an ever-improving trajectory, is essential to his didactic project insofar as it creates room for his didactic goal, the education of the ideal orator. In chapter three, I turned to the conception of the ideal orator himself, arguing that here again, Quintilian differs from Cicero, not least by taking up Stoic notions and reacting to Seneca the Younger's criticism of rhetoric. We have also seen that Quintilian makes prominent use of apotreptic exemplarity, setting his orator and himself against other figures (chiefly philosophers) whom he depicts negatively.

In the first half of this final chapter, we will see that Quintilian similarly contrasts the kind of good and 'masculine' style he envisages for his orator with two antithetical currents of corrupt style, 'modernism' and 'archaism', most prominently when giving advice on imitation practice (§4.1.1).⁴⁹⁵ Archaism, which was to become the dominant current in the Antonine age, is portrayed as rejecting refinement and as being rather marginal (§4.1.2), modernism as being excessively refined and as widespread (§4.1.3). I have argued above that Quintilian rephrases Seneca the Younger's maxim *talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis uita* (*Ep.* 114.1) and that he reacts to *Ep.* 88 in his defence of grammar and of a general education. I will similarly suggest that his descriptions of modernist style at times recall Seneca's *Epistles* 114 and 115 (§4.1.3-4.2.1), and that the relative frequency of such echoes may itself support the validity of each single one.⁴⁹⁶

As Adriano Pennacini and Mario Citroni have pointed out, there is a certain discrepancy between Quintilian's claim that contemporary oratory is blooming and the predictions of a bright future (§2.2.3), and the pervasive portrayal of widespread corruption in the *Institutio*.⁴⁹⁷ In the second half of the chapter, I would like to suggest that a (perhaps rather speculative) solution to this problem may lie in Quintilian's portrayal of Seneca the Younger. First, I will discuss his famous evaluation at *Inst.* 10.1.125-31. We will see that it entails all the major elements of the criticism of modernists, and that the link between Seneca and modernists is reinforced by the fact that Quintilian identifies the start of his teaching career as the moment when this kind of corruption was most rampant (§4.2.1).⁴⁹⁸ Then, I

⁴⁹⁵ As Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 934 writes, the kind of ideal orator Quintilian is envisaging approaches his Ciceronian model and is equally distant from archaism (which Fronto was going to represent) and modernism.

⁴⁹⁶ To follow the method that Knauer 1964, 57 applies to Vergil and Homer.

⁴⁹⁷ Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 903 and Citroni 2017, 38, who also rightly states that Quintilian attributes some merit to both currents.

⁴⁹⁸ Trillitzsch 1971, 67 remarks that Quintilian's description of Seneca's style recalls his attacks on declamation, and that he was trying to rein in the decay of oratory since the Republic. However, as seen in §2.2.3, Quintilian does not subscribe to a narrative of a progressive decay of oratory.

will show how Quintilian, mentioning the address which Seneca wrote, in Nero's name, to the Senate after Agrippina's assassination, discredits him as a didactic and moral authority, and firmly sets him into the context of Neronian Rome (§4.2.2).

Quintilian, as we will see, is heavily critical of Seneca in book ten but prepared to borrow from him when it suits him – an approach far from the “imitative *pietas*”, as Christopher Whitton puts it, of Pliny towards Quintilian.⁴⁹⁹ Given the connection of Seneca with that time and corrupt style, I will suggest that Quintilian may be giving an anachronistic edge to his criticism of corrupt contemporary oratory that conveys plausibility to his praise of good contemporary orators and supports his optimistic predictions for the future, and thus his didactic goal: if contemporary corruption can be anachronistically relegated to the past, the doors are open for a bright new future.

4.1 Corrupt Contemporary Oratory

4.1.1 Introducing Corrupt Oratory to Pupils and Readers

In the previous chapter, we saw how Quintilian sharpens the contours of his portraits of the ideal orator and of himself by contrasting them with those of philosophers and other poor didactic figures. Similarly, he sets his conceptualisation of good style against the background of two contemporary currents of stylistic corruption: ‘archaism’ and ‘modernism’. In this section, I will discuss how he introduces the two currents and how his remarks relate to his advice on *imitatio*. In the next two sections, I will discuss his depiction of archaism (§4.1.2) and modernism (§4.1.3).

From the very start of the work, Quintilian presents *imitatio* not only as an important element of training, but also as a potential source of corruption:

Et haec ipsa magis pertinaciter haerent quae deteriora sunt. Nam bona facile mutantur in peius: quando in bonum uerteris uitia? Non adsuescat ergo, ne dum infans quidem est, sermoni qui dediscendus sit. (Inst. 1.1.5)

“And those things stick more stubbornly which are worse. For good things are easily changed into something worse: when will you transform vices into something good? So let him not get used to a kind of speech that must be unlearned again even when he is a baby.”

Bad things are remembered more easily than good ones and are harder to forget,⁵⁰⁰ and it is easier to prevent faults than correct them, a notion that we also find in Seneca's *Letters*.⁵⁰¹ This warning adds urgency to the quest for a well-spoken nurse. Similarly, Quintilian writes that according to Diogenes of

⁴⁹⁹ Whitton 2019, 106.

⁵⁰⁰ A comparison with dyed wool follows at *Inst.* 1.1.5: see Aßfahl 1932, 103. See on the philosophical use of this image in Hor. *Carm.* 3.5.27-28 Harrison 1986, 502-4 and on precedents Nisbet and Rudd 2014, 90-91.

⁵⁰¹ E.g. in Sen. *Ep.* 25.1; 50.6. See Brunt 2013, 17 on the Stoic notion that false beliefs are particularly pertinacious.

Babylon, the vices with which Alexander the Great's pedagogue Leonides "instilled" (*imbuit*) him with "followed him from that primary education onwards until he was grown up and already the greatest king" (1.1.9: *robustum quoque et iam maximum regem ab illa institutione puerili sunt persecuta*). The reason why bad influences are so dangerous early on is that imitative ability comes before judgement (§1.2.1): vices of speech and character will naturally be absorbed by the child.

This idea also informs Quintilian's argument against home-schooling. He memorably supports his stance through a satirical vignette about the immorality of affluent households (*Inst.* 1.2.6-8).⁵⁰² He begins with an exclamation: "if only we did not corrupt the morals of our children ourselves!" (*utinam mores liberorum nostrorum non ipsi perderemus!*). The first-person plural creates the impression of a general state of affairs.⁵⁰³ This is often the case, as we will see. He goes on to complain that "we drown" (*soluimus*) infancy in pleasures right away. "That soft education, which we call indulgence, crushes all the sinews of mind and body" (1.2.6: *Mollis illa educatio, quam indulgentiam uocamus, nervos omnis mentis et corporis frangit*). The metaphor of dissolution contrasts with the consolidating effect education should have (§1.2.1).⁵⁰⁴ And further: what will an adult not lust after, who crawls on purple? The child cannot articulate a word yet, but already understands what scarlet is, already asks for oysters.⁵⁰⁵ "We train" (1.2.7: *instituiamus*) their palate before their lips – their ability to speak. They grow up on litters: if they touch the ground, they hang from the hands of those who sustain them from both sides. "We are happy" (*gaudemus*) if they say something "rather too licentiously" (*licentius*): words which should not be allowed even to Alexandrian lovers "we accept with a laughter and kiss" (*risu et osculo excipimus*).⁵⁰⁶ "No wonder: we taught them, they heard them from us" (1.2.8: *Nec mirum: nos docuimus, ex nobis audierunt*). They see our girlfriends, our bedfellows; every dinner-party roars with obscene songs, things happen which are embarrassing to say.⁵⁰⁷ This passage, with its wealth of colourful detail, is a notable instance of "visualisation" (*enargeia*), later elucidated through another image of debauchery, Cicero's description of Verres on the shore.⁵⁰⁸ Quintilian ends on a general note:

Fit ex his consuetudo, inde natura. Discunt haec miseri antequam sciant uitia esse: inde soluti ac fluentes non accipiunt ex scholis mala ista, sed in scholas adferunt. (Inst. 1.2.8)

⁵⁰² See Uden 2018, 392 on how Quintilian's critique of home-schooling shows his stance that education is undertaken for the public sphere and differs from Pseudo-Plutarch's "insular model of education".

⁵⁰³ As Kennerly 2019, 125 remarks, Quintilian often speaks in the present tense, using the *topos* of the times to emphasize recent stylistic faults.

⁵⁰⁴ As Edwards 2019, 294 writes about Sen. *Ep.* 114.4, lack of order is a key criticism of style.

⁵⁰⁵ Russell translates *conchylum* as "best purple". However, *conchylum* can also mean (edible) oyster: OLD *conchylum* 1 vs. 2. I would prefer the second option because it points forward to the notion that the children's palate is trained before their ability to speak, while the first one presents a doublet of "purple".

⁵⁰⁶ Alexandrian lovers had a reputation for being particularly corrupt; they belong to Trimalchio's household (Petron. *Sat.* 31.3; 68.3), and at Tac. *Ann.* 14.60.2, an Alexandrian flute-player plays the unhonourable role of falsely accusing Octavia of unchastity.

⁵⁰⁷ Compare Tac. *Dial.* 29.1-4, where Messala indicts contemporary education in similar terms.

⁵⁰⁸ *Inst.* 8.3.64-65: Quintilian says that he feels like he is seeing the scene. See Webb 2009, 107-8 on how Quintilian, recounting his own response to it, exemplifies how *enargeia* partly relies on the listener's imagination.

“From these things arises habit, then nature. The poor children learn them before they know that they are vices. Consequently, dissolute and luxuriant, they do not receive these bad habits from, but rather bring them into the schools.”

Early on, children cannot tell apart virtues and vices.⁵⁰⁹ *Imitatio* will shape them, improving or corrupting their natural abilities. Accordingly, Quintilian envisages various stages of imitation practice (§1.2.1). At first, it must be carefully directed to shape the pupil’s *iudicium*, which will in turn inform the advanced student’s autonomous training. A similar concern with the potential dangers of *imitatio* pervades the advice on early reading practice. After Vergil and Homer, authors and genres should be introduced gradually, according to the effect they may have on the child’s malleable mind. Tragedies are useful, lyric poets ‘nourish’ but teachers must be careful to select appropriate passages within them.⁵¹⁰ Elegy and hendecasyllables should be left out or be read later (1.8.6).⁵¹¹ Similarly, comedy is useful for its portrayal of passions and characters, but should be read “once [the child’s] morals will be in safety” (1.8.7: *cum mores in tuto fuerint*).⁵¹² From genres, Quintilian shifts to times: old Latin authors should be read once the pupil has developed his tastes. They are useful for “abundance of words” (*copiam uerborum*), but “most were more talented than artful” (*plerique plus ingenio quam arte ualuerunt*).⁵¹³ In their tragedies one can find “gravity” (*grauitas*), in their comedies, elegance and something like Attic wit (1.8.8). They are contrasted with modern writers:

Oeconomia quoque in iis diligentior quam in plerisque nouorum erit, qui omnium operum solam uirtutem sententias putauerunt. (Inst. 1.8.9)

“Also organization will be careful in them than in most new authors, who think that epigrams are the only virtue in any work.”

⁵⁰⁹ Compare Ov. *Ars am.* 1.615-16 on simulation of love having the potential to turn into real feeling.

⁵¹⁰ As Calboli 1995, 91-92 notes, Quintilian does not seem fond of lyric poets (for training purposes). Compare Mart. 1.35.1-3 (*Versus scribere me parum severos / nec quos praelegat in schola magister, / Corneli, quereris*) and 8.3.15 (*praelegat ut tumidus rauca te voce magister*).

⁵¹¹ About Horace, Quintilian frames his reservation very politely: *nolim in quibusdam interpretari (Inst. 1.8.6)*. McDermott 1982, 358 imagines that Quintilian’s judgement of Catullus may be influenced by a lost epistolary exchange between Cornelius Nepos and Cicero.

⁵¹² Especially Menander, but also the Latin comic poets may be of some use (*Inst. 1.8.8*); the same preference for Menander is expressed at 10.1.69-72. See Goldberg 1987, 360 on Quintilian quoting Latin comedy, but praising only tragedy and Menander, and Jensen 1997, 371 on Gell. *NA* 2.23 comparing Menander and Caecilius and attributing primacy to the former.

⁵¹³ Compare Cic. *Orat.* 193.

Carelessness due to an exclusive concern for epigrams is attributed to contemporary authors – a characteristic feature of modernists, as we will see.⁵¹⁴ But while Quintilian makes clear that an extensive engagement with texts deviating from the stylistic norm he envisages should be avoided early on, he recommends occasional exposure to them as a way to reinforce pupils' feeling for this norm. Apotreptic exemplarity is a powerful tool, if employed cautiously: pupils must learn not only how to imitate, but also how not to.⁵¹⁵ Thus, the *grammaticus* should indicate words that are suitable for poets, but not for orators:

Deprendat quae barbara, quae inpropria, quae contra legem loquendi sint posita, non ut ex his utique improbentur poetae ... sed ut commoneat artificialium et memoriam agitet. (Inst. 1.8.14)

“Let him point out words which are barbarisms, which are improper, which are placed contrary to the law of speaking, not so that poets may be criticised because of them ... but so that he may remind [students] about rules and stir their memory.”

Readers are reassured that this procedure is not meant as a criticism of poetry as such, but serves to sharpen pupils' feeling for generic boundaries.⁵¹⁶ Poets serve as examples *ex negatiuo*, showing them what oratory should not be like.⁵¹⁷ The difference between poetic and rhetorical style is essentially one of degree: poetry allows for a bolder use of ornaments.⁵¹⁸ The importance of keeping genres distinct is reiterated in the discussion of *imitatio* for advanced pupils (10.1.28; 10.2.21-22).⁵¹⁹

Quintilian gives similar advice regarding early prose reading. The *rhethor* should confront pupils with the kind of oratory they should not imitate:

Ne id quidem inutile, etiam corruptas aliquando et uitiosas orationes, quas tamen plerique iudiciorum prauitate mirentur, legi palam, ostendique in his quam multa inpropria obscura tumida humilia sordida lasciua effeminata sint: quae non laudantur modo a plerisque, sed, quod est peius, propter hoc ipsum quod sunt praua laudantur. (Inst. 2.5.10)

⁵¹⁴ See Citroni 2017, 37. As Kennerly 2019, 125 writes, this is the first remark on *sententiae* as an obsession of modernist writers. *Sententiae* are individuated as a feature of Asianist style at Cic. *Brut.* 325.

⁵¹⁵ Compare *Inst.* 1.2.36.

⁵¹⁶ See on the characteristic double emphasis laid on the moral and technical aspect of training Fögen 2000, 152.

⁵¹⁷ See Peirano Garrison 2019, 42; 91-96 on this function of the *grammaticus* and on poetry paradoxically serving both as a source and as a negative foil against which to measure *ornatus* and on the moralizing critical vocabulary through which Quintilian, following Aristotle, presents poetry as deviant from the norm constituted by oratory.

⁵¹⁸ *Inst.* 1.5.52-53. See Atherton 1998, 237 on the warning that this should not become an opportunity for teachers to show off their skills; cf. e.g. *Inst.* 1.5.11; 8.6.17-18; 8.6.27; 8.6.40; 9.4.56; 9.4.60; 10.1.29-30. Compare Cic. *De or.* 3.100.

⁵¹⁹ As Ax 1990, 153-55 writes, Quintilian sets generic mixing as a key problem of contemporary oratory, as becomes evident not least in his emphasis on the importance of keeping genres separate.

“Not even this is useless: sometimes to read aloud bad and faulty speeches, which however most people admire because of the corruptness of their judgement, and to show how many improper, obscure, swollen, lowly, sordid, lascivious, effeminate [elements] are in them: these are not only praised by most people, but, what is worse, are praised precisely because they are corrupt.”

The *figura etymologica* (*prauitate–praua*) links this corrupt style to the audiences’ tastes. As already discussed, Quintilian sets the judgement of the learned as the norm for good style, and we will see that he criticises modernists for adapting their style to the crowd’s preferences (§§3.2.2, 4.1.3). The qualities attributed to bad style mostly indicate an exuberance which would be more suitable for poetry.⁵²⁰ *Inpropria* and *obscura* are inappropriate for oratory, which must aim for *perspicuitas*, achieved especially through the use of *propria*; *humilia* and *sordida* also breach *perspicuitas* (8.2.1).⁵²¹ *Tumidus* describes what tries but fails to be grand and characterises *cacozelon* (or *mala adfectatio*), an empty wish for display not supported by context and sufficient talent (8.3.56).⁵²² Obscurity, as we will see in the next paragraph, is attributed particularly to archaisers, while effeminacy (*effeminata*) most obviously marks the departure from the ideal ‘masculine’ style and is connected to modernism.⁵²³ *Effeminatus* is not used in Cicero’s rhetorical works, but is employed in Seneca’s *Letters* for corrupt style or performance.⁵²⁴ The same can be said about *lasciua*.⁵²⁵ Quintilian uses *lasciua/lasciuus/lasciuire* for poetic style, particularly Ovid’s.⁵²⁶ Seneca equally connects Ovid and

⁵²⁰ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 128–29 on how some adjectives apply to words, some generally to style, and how some contrast with good qualities (*proprium, sublime, compositio ... uirilis*) mentioned at *Inst.* 2.5.9.

⁵²¹ See *Inst.* 8.6.17–18 on the mistake among orators of using bold metaphors only suitable for poets. Bold metaphors are also at issue at *Sen. Ep.* 114.1.

⁵²² See for the connection of *cacozelia-tumidus* also *Inst.* 2.3.9; 8.3.56; for the differentiation between *magnus/grandis* and *tumidus* 8.3.18; 10.2.16 (resulting from bad *imitatio*); 12.10.80. See 12.10.12 and 12.10.17 (for the link to Asianism), 2.8.9 (as a bad quality of character); 11.1.28 and 11.1.70 (in connection with *iactatio*). *Tumidus* is used positively only once, at 2.10.6 (*grandia et tumida*) about declamatory themes; the unusual pairing *grandis–tumidus* is likely to be a concession to more exuberant school-style.

⁵²³ At *Inst.* 1.10.31 (on contemporary music), 2.5.10; 8 *pr.* 20; 8.3.6; 9.4.142 (on style); 11.3.32 (on performance); 11.3.91 (regarding contemporary actors); and 5.12.19 (for eunuchs, who in turn stand in a comparison with modernism).

⁵²⁴ *Sen. Ep.* 70.6 (*effeminatissimam uocem*); 96.4 (*effeminata uox*); 101.13 (*effeminati carminis turpitudine*); 114.3 (*effeminatus* about *animus*, a quality betrayed by gait and style). Cf. also *Sen. Controv.* 1 *pr.* 8, *Plin. Pan.* 46.4 (on even the populace, influenced by Trajan, now damning *effeminatas artes* like pantomime); 54.1 (on flattery *effeminatis uocibus*).

⁵²⁵ *Lasciua/lasciuus/lasciuire* is used once by Seneca the Elder about style (*Controv.* 2 *pr.* 1 on Arellius Fuscus). Quintilian makes the link between poetry and lasciviousness explicit at *Inst.* 2.4.1–3: *narratio* should neither be too dry and barren (*arida atque ieiuna*) nor too wide-ranging and indulging (*lasciuiat*) in far-fetched digressions, as when people imitate poetic licence.

⁵²⁶ *Inst.* 4.1.77; 9.4.108; 10.1.89. See Berardi 2017, 128; 135 on Quintilian’s advice to present children with examples of modernist and archaist style, on the criticism of Ovid’s *lasciua* as part of his differentiation between oratorical and poetic style, and on the stylistic exuberance characterizing modernists, who are presented as childish. Berardi draws a link to the criticism of Ovid at *Sen. Controv.* 2.2.9; 9.5.17, on which see also Elliott 1985, 10–11. Compare Gunderson 2017, 270 on the connection between declamation and poetry, particularly Ovid.

lasciure when commenting on his depiction of the flood: ‘*Nat lupus inter oues, fuluos uehit unda leones*’. *Non est res satis sobria lasciure deuorato orbe terrarum* (Ov. *Met.* 1.304, Sen. *QNat* 3.27.13: “‘The wolf swims among the sheep, the wave carries the reddish lions.’ It is not an earnest enough thing to be lascivious as the whole world has been swallowed up”).⁵²⁷ This connection (*lasciure*–Ovid) is not made by other authors. The impression that Quintilian is adopting a Senecan stance is reinforced by his evaluation of Maecenas.⁵²⁸ Seneca criticises Maecenas at *Ep.* 114 to exemplify the notion that style and morals match, drawing a picture of his debauched lifestyle and citing from his poetry (114.5). He employs both *lasciua* and *effeminatus* in this connection (*Ep.* 114.2-3), even if not to describe Maecenas directly.⁵²⁹ At *Inst.* 9.4.28, Quintilian criticises three instances of Maecenas’ *compositio* in which faults are striven for “so that they may be unrestrained and lascivious” (*ut exultent atque lasciuiant*). The last example he draws from Maecenas’ verses is this one: ‘*ne exequias quidem unus inter miserrimos uiderem meas*’ (“that I may not see my own funeral, alone among the most wretched”). He comments: *quod inter haec pessimum est, quia in re tristi ludit compositio* (“this is really bad, among other reasons because the composition is playful on a sad subject”).⁵³⁰ This is the same thought Seneca expresses about Ovid’s description of the flood. If Quintilian’s evaluation of Ovid indicates that he knew the *QNat* passage, he may also be transferring Seneca’s remark on Ovid onto Maecenas’ verse about his own funeral.

After advising the *rhetor* to sometimes confront children with bad oratory, Quintilian describes two opposed stylistic tendencies through a bodily allegory:

Nam sermo rectus et secundum naturam enuntiatus nihil habere ex ingenio uidetur; illa uero quae utcumque deflexa sunt tamquam exquisitiora miramur non aliter quam distortis et quocumque modo prodigiosis corporibus apud quosdam maius est pretium quam iis quae nihil ex communis habitus bonis perdiderunt, atque etiam qui specie capiuntur uulsis leuatisque et inustas comas acu comentibus et non suo colore nitidis plus esse formae putant quam possit tribuere incorrupta natura, ut pulchritudo corporis uenire uideatur ex malis morum. (Inst. 2.5.11-12)

“For a straight, natural speech is thought to lack talent; but we ‘admire’ what is distorted in one way or another as more exquisite – just as some people set a higher value on bodies which are crippled and in some way monstrous than on those which have lost none of the qualities of a

⁵²⁷ See Morgan 2003, 71 on the similarity between the criticism of Ovid in Quintilian and at Sen. *QNat* 3.27.13; as he writes, the core criticism in both passages is inappropriateness.

⁵²⁸ Seneca the Elder comments on the exuberance of Ovid’s *ingenium* (*Controv.* 9.5.17; *excerpta* 9.5.1), but never uses *lasciua/lasciure* in connection with him, nor does Martial.

⁵²⁹ As Edwards 2019, 292 writes, gendered terms are particularly prominent in Sen. *Ep.* 114.

⁵³⁰ Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 784-85 refer to the equally damning judgement on Maecenas at Sen. *Ep.* 114.4 and comment on the difficulty of analysing rhythm and meaning of the quotation.

common appearance; while others again, who are struck by superficial beauty, think that those who have plucked [their hairs] and smoothened [their skin] and who coiffe their burnt locks and glow with a faked complexion have more beauty than uncorrupted nature could give, so that beauty of the body seems to come from vices of character.”

Again, the use of the present tense indicates that this is a general situation. The two tastes are quite the opposite, but both reject ‘natural’ bodies.⁵³¹ As we will see in the next two sections, similar physical imagery is employed in 8 *pr.* to contrast archaist and modernist style with the kind of style Quintilian promotes and describes as a ‘manly’ body. The search for bent and monstrous bodies corresponds to the search for old obscure words by the archaisers. The delight in bodies adorned through hyper-refined, ‘effeminate’ bodily care, visualised as haircare and artificial colour, renders the modernists’ indulgence in poetic vocabulary and stylistic excess. And indeed, a few paragraphs later Quintilian explicitly individuates these two currents (admirers of old Latin literature and promoters of a modern style) as the most corrupt ones, which should chiefly be avoided by pupils (2.5.21-23). This advice matches that at 1.8.8-9 about not letting the pupils read new and old Latin poets early on.⁵³² While the teacher may occasionally confront pupils with corrupt style, at this stage they would risk absorbing vices through extensive reading. Just before the overview of authors, the two currents are contrasted again:

Nam quidam solos ueteres legendos putant, neque in ullis aliis esse naturalem eloquentiam et robur uiris dignum arbitrantur; alios recens haec lasciuii deliciae et omnia ad uoluptatem multitudinis imperitae composita delectant. (Inst. 10.1.43)

“For there are some who think that only old authors should be read, and believe that in nobody else there is natural eloquence and a strength worthy of real men; while others like this new lasciviousness and pleasures and all that is composed for the pleasure of the ignorant mass.”

Once again, the two currents appear as two, equally corrupt, extremes. Archaisers emulate old authors because they think that only their style is masculine; they are hyper-masculine in the sense that they

⁵³¹ See Russell 1981, 122 on the strong ethical component of Quintilian’s conception of style and conversely of his criticism of corrupt eloquence.

⁵³² See Calcante 2007, 120-21 on Quintilian’s advice about avoiding corrupt style early on, and generally on his scepticism towards archaic Latin literature.

reject modern refinement.⁵³³ Modernists on the other hand delight in it; again, lasciviousness and the pleasure of the crowd are associated with them.⁵³⁴

The dangers of bad *imitatio* are also pointed out in the theoretical discussion of *Inst.* 10.2. Quintilian insists that one should be extremely careful in selecting authors and the best features within them: “for there are many who try being similar to any worst and most corrupt [model]” (10.2.14: *nam sunt plurimi qui similitudinem pessimi cuiusque et corruptissimi concupierint*). A second piece of advice follows, again supported by the negative example of bad contemporary practice: “Then, we must establish what the features are which we want to emulate in the authors whom we have chosen” (10.1.14: *tum in ipsis quos elegerimus quid sit <ad> quod nos efficiendum comparemus*).⁵³⁵ Also great authors sometimes make mistakes, which is why one should imitate various models; “and if only imitators would improve good elements as much as they exasperate bad ones!” (10.2.15: *atque utinam tam bona imitantes dicerent melius quam mala peius dicunt!*).⁵³⁶ Many fail to judge which authors are good, and which elements to select within them. That they seek out the most corrupt authors recalls the claim that modernists are popular precisely because of their vices (2.5.12); that they magnify their models’ weaknesses but not their strengths reflects the idea that vices are more easily absorbed than virtues (1.1.5).⁵³⁷ Those imitators are slightly better, but still poor, who are superficial:

Nec uero saltem iis quibus ad euitanda uitia iudicii satis fuit sufficiat imaginem uirtutis effingere et solam, ut <ita> dixerim, cutem uel potius illas Epicuri figuras, quas e summis corporibus dicit effluere. (Inst. 10.2.15)

“Also for those who had at least enough judgement to avoid vices it will not be enough to give a projection of virtue and merely, so to say, of the skin or rather of those particles of Epicurus, which according to him flow off the top of surfaces.”

The boldness of the skin metaphor is softened, as recommended. Such imitators, Quintilian explains, shape their style after the appearance of a speech without having fully examined its virtues; they may produce a similarity in words and rhythm, but “do not achieve the strength of speaking and of invention”

⁵³³ Citroni 2017, 23 convincingly argues that while *antiquus/uetus* and derivatives in Quintilian often indicate an undefined distance from the present, when the context makes clear that outdatedness is at issue, it is reasonable to assume that they refer to the pre-Ciceronian period. Instead, Maternus in Tacitus’ *Dialogus* counts Cicero among the *antiqui*: see Goldberg 1999, 232.

⁵³⁴ See Peirano Garrison 2019, 33: “Above all, the two key negative concepts of pleasure (*voluptas*) and display (ostentation) link poetry and epideictic”. Peterson 1891, 18 also makes this link. Compare the contrast between virtue and pleasure, Stoicism and Epicureanism, manliness and effeminacy built in Sen. *Dial.* 2.1.1; 7.7.3.

⁵³⁵ Compare Bloomer 2007, 298 on the implications of Seneca the Elder’s advertisement of his memory and the connection he establishes between his contemporaries’ forgetting past models and stylistic and moral decadence.

⁵³⁶ Compare Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.51-52.

⁵³⁷ See Van den Berg 2014, 252 on lack of *iudicium* being the key issue behind bad imitation for Quintilian.

(*uim dicendi atque inuentionis non adsecuntur*).⁵³⁸ “And mostly, they lean towards what is worse” (10.2.16: *plerumque declinant in peius*). The choice of verb, *declinant*, mirrors Lucretian terminology for the atoms’ swerve and corroborates the impression that Quintilian is supporting an important point through a Lucretian echo (compare 3.1.4; §1.1.2).⁵³⁹ He then explains the style of various currents as resulting from failed imitation (10.2.16-17).⁵⁴⁰

Overall, it appears that the discourses about *imitatio* and corrupt oratory are tightly linked in the *Institutio*. Even if Quintilian acknowledges various currents of bad style (including Asianism and Atticism: §2.2.3), he devotes the most space to archaism and modernism. In the next two sections, I will consider his presentation of each current, showing that he sets modernism as the more widespread current, not archaism, which would become predominant in the Antonine period. Quintilian’s polemic against these two styles contributes to his Ciceronian self-fashioning and creates a negative foil against which he sets his conception of good style. Furthermore, considering his advice to teachers to expose pupils to specimens of corrupt writing, his characterization of corrupt oratory may count as one more example of his performing his own advice.

4.1.2 Archaisers. Recondite Tastes

Quintilian discusses “antiquity” (*antiquitas*) as one of the criteria sanctioning language next to “rationale” (*ratio*), “authority” (*auctoritas*) and “common usage” (*consuetudo*) in *Inst.* 1.6. He attributes the greatest importance to common usage (1.6.3; §3.2.2).⁵⁴¹ Old words have their charm, but he cautions:

Sed opus est modo, ut neque crebra sint haec nec manifesta, quia nihil est odiosius adfectione, nec utique ab ultimis et iam oblitteratis repetita temporibus, qualia sunt 'topper' et 'antegerio' et 'exanclare' et 'prosapia' et Saliorum carmina uix sacerdotibus suis satis intellecta ... oratio uero, cuius summa uirtus est perspicuitas, quam sit uitiosa si egeat interprete! Ergo ut nouorum optima erunt maxime uetera, ita ueterum maxime noua. (Inst. 1.6.39-41)

⁵³⁸ Epicurus, *Ep. Hdt.* 46-47; Lucr. 4.42-44. As Peterson 1891, 87 writes, Quintilian is referring to the theory of εἰδωλα first developed by Democritus, adopted by Epicurus and presented by Lucretius. See Baier 2015, 125-27 on how Quintilian in this Epicurean image condenses his position that *imitatio* must go beyond the surface and consider the intended effect upon the reader, and on the utilitarian character of his conception of *imitatio*; Baier points to Varro’s conceptualization of cultural development in *Ling.* 5.108 and *Rust.* 1.18.7-8 and to Reinhardt 2008, 138-39 for the Epicurean background of the concept of *utilitas*.

⁵³⁹ Quintilian only employs *declinare* to speak about corrupt speech at *Inst.* 4.3.15 (*a recto itinere declinat oratio*). Lucr. 2.221; 2.250; 2.253; 2.259 uses *declinare*, the kindred *inclinare* at 2.243; 6.563; 573 and *clinamen* at 2.292. The verb used at Lucr. 4.43 is *mittere*, not *effluere*, but this fits with Quintilian’s tendency not to be lexically precise in allusions.

⁵⁴⁰ As Fantham 1978a, 104 writes, Quintilian individuates misdirected imitation as one cause of affected style. One of these corrupt currents is ‘Sallustian’ brevity: see Raschieri 2016, 150 on Quintilian’s cautioning to use *Sallustiana breuitas* moderately (*Inst.* 4.2.45). Compare 8.3.82 on imitators of Sallust’s brevity becoming obscure. If Sallust is a successful “verbal necromancer” of old-fashioned vocabulary, as Ash 2017, 198 puts it, his imitators are not, according to Quintilian. See also Krebs 2008, 235 on the example of *hebescere uirtus* at Sall. *Cat.* 12.1 as a case of brevity and obscurity creating ambiguity, but in a meaningful way.

⁵⁴¹ *Inst.* 1.5.63; see Citroni 2017, 30.

“But moderation is needed, so that they may be neither too frequent nor too prominent, for there is nothing more irritating than *affectation*, and one should not go fetch words from the very farthest and forgotten times, such as ‘*topper*’, ‘*antegerio*’, ‘*exanclare*’ and ‘*prosapia*’, or the Salian songs which are already barely understood by the priests themselves ... but how faulty would a speech, the chief virtue of which is clarity, be, if it needed a translator! Thus, just as the best of the new words are the oldest ones, so the best of the old words are the newest ones.”

Moderation is key.⁵⁴² Old words must be used sparingly, excessive use means falling into empty showing off – something for which, as seen above, Quintilian reproaches philosophers and bad teachers (§§1.1.2; 3.1.2). The example of the Salian hymns, which are only, and not even fully, understood by their priests, seems adopted from Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.86-89 and neatly conveys the exclusivity and impracticality of such language.⁵⁴³ As the exclamation makes clear, it is absurd for an orator to speak like this, for he must be understood by his audience. This recalls Cicero’s criticism of Stoic orators refusing to sway the audience by appealing to its emotions, thus failing to convince.⁵⁴⁴

Archaist tastes are mentioned repeatedly in the grammatical chapters. For instance, discussing whether to adopt Greek endings in loanwords or whether to Latinize them, Quintilian writes: *Ac si reperias grammaticum ueterum amatorem, neget quicquam ex Latina ratione mutandum* (1.5.59: “And if you happen to find a grammarian who is a lover of the old [authors], he will deny that anything should be changed of the Latin rules”). As often, Quintilian here takes a middle stance, arguing for Latinization when possible, but rejecting it as old-fashioned in some instances. He also claims that excessive love for *antiquitas* can make for odd pronunciation (1.6.7) and criticises contemporaries with an excessive penchant for ancient vocabulary, refusing to accept two words used by Cato, ‘*tuburchinabundum*’ and ‘*lurchinabundum*’ (1.6.42). Similarly, he rejects the forms ‘*dicae*’ and ‘*faciae*’ which Cato employed instead of ‘*dicam*’ and ‘*faciam*’ (1.7.23: “I will say” and “I will do”), an example recurring at 9.4.39.⁵⁴⁵ Cato here as elsewhere represents old Latin authors.⁵⁴⁶

As already mentioned, at 8 *pr.* Quintilian contrasts archaist and modernist styles with ‘good’ style. Some, he writes, know no end to discussing and dwelling almost on single syllables. They are

⁵⁴² Compare *Rhet. Her.* 4.15 on *prisca uerba* and Cic. *De or.* 3.153 on their (cautious) use conveying gravity; see Calcante 2007, 112-14 on Quintilian operating with *antiquitas* as with an established category, and taking a balanced position (sparing use creates authority and majesty, excessive use *adfectatio*); Calcante also points to the polemic in Sen. *Ep.* 114.13 against the Sallustian style of Arruntius. Edwards 2019, 298 conversely points to Quintilian’s criticism of emulators of Sallust and Thucydides at *Inst.* 10.1.17 when discussing Sen. *Ep.* 114.11.

⁵⁴³ Ax 2005, 299 remarks on Quintilian’s mocking tone without pointing to Horace, but see Innes 1988, 311 on the cautious use of archaism recommended at Cic. *De or.* 3.152, and how it is in accord with the stance at Hor. *Ars P.* 60-72 and also Quintilian’s.

⁵⁴⁴ See Bartsch 2017, 215, who *inter alia* cites the anecdote about the Stoic P. Rutilius Rufus, who speaking like this failed to defend himself (Cic. *Orat.* 1.227-33).

⁵⁴⁵ See Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 804.

⁵⁴⁶ See Calboli 1995, 96-97 on Quintilian’s dislike of Cato’s archaic style.

always looking for something “more old-fashioned, remote, unexpected” (*magis antiquum, remotum, inopinatum*) and do not understand that the meaning lies low in an oration in which single words are praised (8 *pr.* 32). These lovers of old literature spend too much time discussing details; like philosophers, they neglect contents, focusing on words. The concluding sentence of this preface summarises the criticism against both archaisers and modernists:

*Ea debent praestare sine dubio et admirabilem et iucundam orationem, uerum admirabilem non sic quo modo prodigia miramur, et iucundam non deformi uoluptate sed cum laude ac dignitate coniuncta. (Inst. 8 *pr.* 33)*

“These (words) must certainly make the speech both admirable and pleasant, but ‘admirable’ not in the way in which we ‘admire’ monstrosities, and agreeable through a pleasure which is not perverse, but connected to praise and dignity.”

Prodigia recalls *prodigiosis corporibus* at *Inst.* 2.5.11: these are the only two instances in which Quintilian employs *prodigium/prodigiosus* as literary critical terms; both times, he attaches *miramur*.⁵⁴⁷ The absurdity of using obsolete vocabulary is reiterated in the chapter on clarity and obscurity:

At obscuritas fit uerbis iam ab usu remotis, ut si commentarios quis pontificum et uetustissima foedera et exoletos scrutatus auctores id ipsum petat ex iis quae inde contraxerit. Hinc enim aliqui famam eruditionis adfectant, ut quaedam soli scire uideantur (Inst. 8.2.12-13)

“But obscurity is created through words that are already out of use, as if someone, having searched through the commentaries of the *pontifices* and the oldest treatises and obsolete authors should try to achieve precisely that [obscurity] through the words which he found there. From this, indeed, some affect a renown for erudition, that only they may seem to know some things.”

As *adfectare* signals, these archaisers are motivated by a desire to show off, losing sight of what is useful. Paradoxically, they strive for general recognition on the grounds that they are unintelligible to most. Both the use of *adfectare* and their word-chasing in obscure sources recall 1.6.40-41.

⁵⁴⁷ Quintilian uses *prodigium/prodigiosus* another six times: *Inst.* 1.1.2 (*non aliter miramur quam prodigiosa corpora* on intellectual deficiency); 1.10.47 (*ne uelut prodigio ... terrentur* on Sulpicius Gallus calming the soldiers’ spirits by explaining the moon eclipse: cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.23, and on the relevance of astronomy in *De re publica* Gallagher 2001, 520); 7 *pr.* 2 (*habeat eadem omnia, prodigium sit tamen* comparing a statue with misplaced elements to a speech lacking *dispositio* in allusion to Hor. *Ars P.* 1-5); 8.3.84 (*prodigiosum illud corpus* about Polyphemus).

In the first chapter on *ornatus*, Quintilian again recommends *antiquitas* as a feature conveying dignity (*dignitatem*) while cautioning that it should be used sparingly: *Sed utendum modo nec ex ultimis tenebris repetenda* (8.3.24-5: “But one must only use them [with moderation], and they should not be sought from the farthest shadows”). The metaphor of pitch-black darkness for temporal remoteness harks back to the fault of “obscurity” (*obscuritas*), discussed in 8.2.12-21. This is precisely what archaisers do, indulging in excessive, impractical learnedness and becoming so obscure that only the like-minded can understand them. Needing someone to ‘translate’ them to the crowd, they miss the whole point of oratory, which is to communicate something to an audience, and are similar to philosophers and other bad didactic figures insofar as they engage in arcane debates (see §§1.2.1, 3.1.2). Their laborious imitation of outdated literature results in an anachronistic lack of refinement. While the unlearned crowd’s tastes (§3.2.2) are dismissed, archaisers go too far in their exclusivity.

Quintilian criticises archaisers’ rejection of stylistic innovation in his discussion of epigrams, the latest craze for modernists: no progress would ever be made if only the old was always reproduced (8.5.33). He makes the same argument in the chapter on prose rhythm:

Neque ignoro quosdam esse qui curam omnem compositionis excludant, atque illum horridum sermonem, ut forte fluxerit, modo magis naturalem, modo etiam magis uirilem esse contendunt. Qui si id demum naturale esse dicunt quod natura primum ortum est et quale ante cultum fuit, tota hic ars orandi subuertitur. (Inst. 9.4.3)

“And I am not unaware that there are some who exclude any care of composition, and who claim that that kind of horrid speech, as it flows randomly, is more natural, or also more masculine. If these people say that that, finally, is natural which is first born from nature and is as it was before cultivation, this whole art of speaking is overthrown.”

Quintilian undermines this position by taking it to an extreme. He adds that speech initially lacked not only prose rhythm, but also every other (artful) feature; if it were not allowed for anything better to develop, humanity should not have swapped huts for houses, furs for clothes, cities for mountains and woods (9.4.4). A string of rhetorical questions follows, in which various cultural achievements (like agriculture and husbandry) are adduced as examples of development (9.4.5).⁵⁴⁸ Finally, Quintilian states his own idea of *natura*: *Verum id est maxime naturale quod fieri natura optime patitur* (9.4.5: “However,

⁵⁴⁸ See Calcante 2007, 117-18 on Quintilian’s polemic against archaizing orators who propose an unpolished style as more masculine.

that is most natural which nature allows to be perfected”).⁵⁴⁹ The conception of what is natural is broadened to entail its best potential.⁵⁵⁰

Quintilian similarly criticises archaisers’ wrong understanding of what it means to speak naturally regarding performance: some think that a “rough” (*rudem*) way of speaking is “stronger and the only [speech] which is worthy of men” (*fortiorem et solam uiris dignam*). These are the same who in speech condemn care and art and splendour, and whatever is achieved through effort, “as affected and not natural enough” (*ut adfectata et parum naturalia*), or who “affect an imitation of old times” (*imitationem antiquitatis adfectant*) through lack of polish in word choice and pronunciation (11.3.11). Their reported criticism contrasts with the effort they are elsewhere said to devote to their hunt for old words, and the polyptoton of *adfectare* undermines their argument by presenting it as hypocritical.

The amount of philological work Quintilian attributes to archaisers recalls the bookishly learned discussions which we find in Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*.⁵⁵¹ Considering the recurring mention of archaist debates in the grammatical chapters, there seems to be some affinity between archaisers and grammarians. Both appear as highly specialised scholars engaging in obscure discussions – a marker of bad orators and teachers. This impression may be supported by the way in which Quintilian attributes the tendency to integrate more (obsolete) subdivisions to *status*-theory to “those who want old authors to be read more carefully” without specifying that these “old authors” are writers on rhetoric (*Inst.* 3.6.62). Overall, he portrays archaisers as achieving an uncouth effect through laborious philological research, and as almost unintelligible to anyone else. Because of their prioritisation of words over contents and their wish for display, they let out of sight the goal of forensic speech, victory.

Archaisers’ rejection of literary progress goes against Quintilian’s conception of literary development, which is central to his project because it adds plausibility to it (§2.2.3). In the next section, we will see that while the descriptions of archaist and modernist style are antithetical in various respects, they share these two underlying faults, the wish to show off and a focus on words over contents. It will also appear that Quintilian’s criticism of modernists is more comprehensive and that it is presented as the predominant current (and, from a didactic perspective, as the more dangerous one).

4.1.3 Modernists. Seducing the Crowds

We have seen that Quintilian repeatedly contrasts modernist with archaist style. In 8 *pr.*, good style is conceptualised as a well-trained male body, and archaism as the search for a deformed one. Modernist style instead is described as too ornate and effeminate:

⁵⁴⁹ Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 735-36 argue that Quintilian is criticising the ignorant modernist *rheto*res he attacks at *Inst.* 2.12 and adduce the (strong) argument that we find the same idea of cultural development at 2.17.9. I would nevertheless suggest that archaisers are the target here, since *horridum/uirilem*, the rejection of new developments, and the ensuing remark on others who engage in lascivious composition suggests that the archaisers are the ones neglecting *compositio*, the modernists the ones engaging in it, albeit excessively (9.4.6; §4.1.3).

⁵⁵⁰ Varwig 1976, 125. Compare Cic. *Orat.* 31 on Atticists failing to benefit from literary progress.

⁵⁵¹ See on bookishness in Gellius Johnson 2009, 322-23.

... si quis uulsa atque fucata muliebriter comat, foedissima sint ipso formae labore. Et cultus concessus atque magnificus addit hominibus, ut Graeco uersu testatum est, auctoritatem: at muliebris et luxuriosus non corpus exornat, sed detegit mentem. (Inst. 8 pr. 20-21)

“... if someone adorns [bodies] womanishly, having plucked them and used make-up, they will be very ugly because of the very effort spent on their beauty. And a bodily care which is permissible and grand conveys, as it is testified in a Greek verse, authority to men; but if it is womanly and luxurious it does not adorn the body, but betrays the mind.”

The verse, as Donald Russell comments, is not identified; however, the thought is similar to that expressed in 11.1.30.⁵⁵² *Vulsa* recalls *uulsis* at 2.5.11-12, as do *formae* and the image of coloured hair. Depilation, coloured hair, and make-up are main expressions of an overly ornate, effeminate bodily care.⁵⁵³ The link between hyper-polished style, depicted as a hyper-kempt body, and the mind recalls Sen. *Ep.* 115.2:

Nosti comptulos iuuenes, barba et coma nitidos, de capsula totos: nihil ab illis speraueris forte, nihil solidum. Oratio cultus animi est: si circumtonsa est et fucata et manu facta, ostendit illum quoque non esse sincerum et habere aliquid fracti. Non est ornamentum uirile concinnitas. (Sen. Ep. 115.2)

“You have seen these trimmed youths, beard and hair shining, as neat as a pin: you may hope nothing from them, nothing solid anyway. Speech is the ornament of the soul: if it [speech] is all shaved and dyed and hand-made, it shows that that [the soul] also is not sincere and has something corrupt. Excessive elegance is not a manly ornament.”

Seneca takes the appearance of adorned youths, characterised by their haircare, as an indicator of their poor oratory, the excessive elegance of which in turn betrays an unmanly mind. Quintilian, like Seneca, pairs the two notions of haircare and dyeing, using the same word (*fucata*) for the the latter. He only

⁵⁵² Russell 2001, vol. 3, 319.

⁵⁵³ See for the link between haircare and morality e.g. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.59 on Iuba, *Cat.* 2.22 on Catiline and his debauched friends, *Red. sen.* 13 about Clodius; also *Sest.* 18, *Pis.* 25. At *Cael.* 33, shaggy beards are opposed to well-kempt fashionable ones (see Christenson 2004, 69 on the role of facial hair in this speech); in Petronius we often find lascivious slave-boys characterized by their hair, e.g. *Sat.* 27.2: 29.3 (young Trimalchio on a painting); 34.4; 57.9; 63.3; 70.8. See also Sen. *Ep.* 114.21; 115. 2, or Mart. 2.57.5; 3.58.30-31; 9.27.1 on depilation as a sign of lasciviousness.

implies the link between style and morality which he later draws at *Inst.* 11.1.30.⁵⁵⁴ The notion of brokenness is also connected to effeminacy.⁵⁵⁵

‘Masculinity’, as already seen, is characterised by balance and moderation, which explains Quintilian’s emphasis on the notion of aptness (§3.2.2). ‘Effeminacy’, instead, entails excess:

A corruptissimo quoque poetarum figuras seu tralationes mutuamur, tum demum ingeniosi scilicet si ad intellegendos nos opus sit ingenio. (Inst. 8 pr. 25)

“We borrow figures or metaphors from all the most corrupt poets, and then finally we are ‘talented’, of course, when one needs talent to understand us.”

The first-person plural as often implies that this is a widespread tendency. Bold metaphors are poetic and create obscurity (8.6.14).⁵⁵⁶ The legal verb *mutuamur* underlines that such vocabulary is extraneous to rhetorical speech.⁵⁵⁷ These speakers disregard the boundaries between poetic and prose style, a failure that could be seen as an educational one: they did not internalise the generic differences which the *grammaticus* should have inculcated into them. Children like modernist style because of its exuberance, which resembles their natural disposition (§2.2.3). Modernists are themselves childish insofar as they did not properly engage in the education that creates adult men, which shows in their own preference for poetry and an exuberant (and thus effeminate) style.

In his discussion of *ornatus*, Quintilian again describes modernist style through bodily imagery:

Sed hic ornatus (repetam enim) uirilis et fortis et sanctus sit nec effeminatam leuitatem et fuco eumentitum colorem amet: sanguine et uiribus niteat. Hoc autem adeo uerum est ut, cum in hac maxime parte sint uicina uirtutibus uitia, etiam qui utiis utuntur uirtutum tamen iis nomen imponant. Quare nemo ex corruptis dicat me inimicum esse culte dicentibus: non hanc esse uirtutem nego, sed illis eam non tribuo. (Inst. 8.3.6-7)

“But this kind of ornament (for I shall repeat it) should be manly and strong and pure, and not love effeminate levity and a complexion faked through make-up; it should shine through blood and strength. That however is so true that, since especially in this domain [of ornament] vices lie next to virtues, also those who deploy vices nevertheless call them virtues. Because of this,

⁵⁵⁴ *Concinnitas* at Sen. *Ep.* 115.2 may recall *concinnum* at Cic. *De or.* 3.100. Sen. *Controv.* 1 pr. 8 also connects extravagantly polished appearance to rhetorical corruption. He describes the youths as *effeminatos* and criticizes their laziness, and *inter alia* their womanlike treatment of hair and voice. See on the use of physical metaphors already in the Atticism-Asianism debate Brink 1989, 478.

⁵⁵⁵ See Edwards 2019, 291 on its use here and at Sen. *Ep.* 90.19; 114.1

⁵⁵⁶ See Arist. *Rh.* 1406b5-10: bad use of metaphors causes ‘frigidity’: they can be ridiculous or incongruously lofty, or unclear and poetic.

⁵⁵⁷ OLD *mutuor*.

let none of these corrupt people call me averse to those who speak ornately: I do not say that it is not a virtue, but I do not attribute it to them.”

The first sentence may again recall Seneca, namely his description of a good style at *Ep.* 114.22: *Illo sano ac valente oratio quoque robusta, fortis, virilis est*. “When that [the spirit] is healthy and strong, speech will also be robust, strong, manly.” *Fortis* and *uirilis* are present in both passages. Parenthetically remarking that he is repeating himself, Quintilian as often conveys weight to his point. Claiming that the orators he depicts as corrupt are unable to differentiate between virtues and vices, good and bad style, he discredits their position and thus, conversely, enhances his own authority as a judge of style.⁵⁵⁸ He later cites Cicero for the position that ornament should be moderate because excess is always faulty (8.3.42) and lists markers of excess, including the use of far-fetched metaphors and their mixing, a mistake he attributes to modernists (8 *pr.* 25).⁵⁵⁹

The most distinctive feature of modernist style is an excessive use of epigrams.⁵⁶⁰ Quintilian says that “now” (*nunc*), they think that every ending requires an epigram (8.5.13), and adds:

Turpe autem ac prope nefas ducunt respirare ullo loco qui adclamationem non petierit. Inde minuti corruptique sensiculi et extra rem petiti: neque enim possunt tam multae bonae sententiae esse quam necesse est multae sint clausulae. (*Inst.* 8.5.14)

“They deem it shameful and almost sacrilegious to breath at any place that did not strive for acclaim. Hence, there are tiny and corrupt little periods, and which have nothing to do with the content: for there cannot be as many good epigrams as there must, necessarily, be endings.”

The incongruously strong *nefas* suggests that modernists are obsessed with what really is petty stylistic detail. The idea that they strive for applause literally at every breath indicates a craze for popular praise.⁵⁶¹ Their way of proceeding is shown to be absurd, and thus ridiculous (§2.2.2). The comment that their little phrases have nothing to do with the subject matter implies that they value words over

⁵⁵⁸ Cicero adopts a similar strategy when denying that Atticists know what Attic style really is: *Orat.* 28-32. Quintilian repeatedly highlights the notion of the proximity of virtues and vices (esp. *Inst.* 1.5.1; 2.12.4; 8.3.56; 9.3.1; 9.3.27). Compare Dem. *Eloc.* 114 on styles having their correspondent vices, also Hor. *Ars P.* 25-31. Ovid appropriates this notion for an amatory context at *Rem. am.* 315-30.

⁵⁵⁹ See Cic. *Part. or.* 19-20. At *Inst.* 8.6.17, Quintilian writes that some mistakenly think metaphors appropriate for poetry can be used in prose and remarks that poets (unlike orators) are concerned solely with pleasure; at 8.6.50, he warns against mixing metaphors, saying it is a common error.

⁵⁶⁰ See Russell 2001, vol. 3, 303-4 on the difficulty to translate *sententia*. For Kriel 1961, 89, Quintilian presents a double meaning of *sententia* as a neat formulation of a general truth and as a pointed expression relying on antithesis, word-play, hyperbole or witticism.

⁵⁶¹ Pers. 1 ridicules precisely such an empty wish for praise in poets. See Ferriss-Hill 2012, 382 on the criticism of archaic and of effeminate contemporary literature in Pers. 1.

contents; and the idea of fragmentation or enervation is also a recurrent one.⁵⁶² The disparaging diminutive *sensiculi* mirrors the brevity of their epigrams. Quintilian uses a similar diminutive later in the chapter:

Ad hoc plerique minimis⁵⁶³ etiam inuentiunculis gaudent, quae excussae risum habent, inuentae facie ingenii blandiuntur. (Inst. 8.5.22)

“Again, most orators rejoice even in tiny quips which, examined thoroughly, arouse laughter, but when first invented seduce through the impression of talent.”

The use of the diminutive creates the impression of infantilization, enhanced by the reference to their pretence of *ingenium*: while talent is important, the adult orator will have improved it through art and training, and it is the young child who is characterised only through his talent.

The diminutive *sententiolae* is often used for such epigrams. We first find it at *Inst.* 5.13.37: *Alii diligentia lapsi uerbis etiam uel sententiolis omnibus respondendum putant, quod est infinitum et superuacuum* (“Others, misled by excessive diligence, think that every argument must be countered through words or tiny epigrams, which is much too laborious and useless”). At 9.2.98, we are told that someone “who gives an oath for the sake of a little epigram” (*qui sententiolae gratia iurat*) at every opportunity is not trustworthy. At 11.1.52, the diminutive appears in a rhetorical question: *Atqui sunt quaedam actiones in satisfactione, deprecatione, confessione positae: sententiolisne flendum erit?* (“But some cases entail an apology, plea, or confession: should one weep in tiny epigrams?”). The expected answer is no; they would undermine high pathos; the juxtaposition of *sententiolisne* and *flendum* renders the incongruity. Again, the diminutive reflects both form and effect of the epigrams.

As seen above, Quintilian criticises archaisers’ rejection of epigrams, recommending them for moderate use (8.5.34). He regularly employs them himself to drive home a point. However, he says that if he had to choose, “I would prefer that old roughness in speaking to this new licentiousness” (8.5.34: *ueterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam istam nouam licentiam*).⁵⁶⁴ That is, hyper-masculine lack of refinement is preferable to effeminate stylistic excess. He chastises the craze for epigrams again near the end of the last chapter on figures (*Inst.* 9.3), a prominent position:

⁵⁶² *Fractus* is used e.g. at *Inst.* 1.10.31 (contemporary music); 8.3.57 and 12.10.12 (about composition). *Minutus* is used for modernist style at 8.5.14; 8.6.28; 10.1.130.

⁵⁶³ Russell 2001, vol. 3, 418 prints *mimicis*, “farcical”.

⁵⁶⁴ See Henderson 1991, 84 on Quintilian’s stance on *sententiae*, Dozier 2013, 145-46 on his remark that he does not want there to be *lumina* all over the speech (*Inst.* 8.5.34). As Kennerly 2019, 124; 128 writes, Quintilian does not disapprove of *sententiae* as such, but of their excessive use. See 5.11.37 on *sententiae* having a strong probative force because they contain a truth disconnected from time or place. For Kennerly, this contradicts Quintilian’s stance that the orator should always consider his speaking situation (4.1.52; 9.3.102; 11.1.4). However, I would say that it fits well with the importance he attributes to historical *exempla* precisely because of their perceived impartiality (see §3.2.2). Already at *Inst.* 4.2.121, Quintilian remarks with a culinary metaphor that an epigram can sometimes, so to say, restore the judge’s weary stomach.

Sunt qui, neglecto rerum pondere et uiribus sententiarum, si uel inania uerba in hos modos deprauarunt summos se iudicent artifices, ideoque non desinant eas nectere, quas sine substantia sectari tam est ridiculum quam quaerere habitum gestumque sine corpore. (Inst. 9.3.100)

“There are some [speakers] who, ignoring the weight of the contents and the force of the epigrams, think that they are the greatest artists if only they have corrupted empty words in these ways, and therefore do not stop putting them together; it is as ridiculous to pursue them [epigrams] without content as to strive for bearing and gesture without a body.”

Epigrams must be used to highlight a thought and are pointless without it; *res* are more important than *uerba*. Even good epigrams, like anything, should be used sparingly (9.3.101). Again, it appears that modernists, archaisers, philosophers, and other bad didactic figures share the fault of focusing on words, not contents. Ridiculing them, Quintilian as often employs a strategy he recommends.⁵⁶⁵ These various features attributed to modernists (epigrams, childishness, poetic excess, emptiness of contents, lasciviousness and the wish for popular acclaim) are again linked in the chapter on style in book 12:

Falluntur enim plurimum qui uitiosum et corruptum dicendi genus, quod aut uerborum lasciuia exultat aut puerilibus sententiolis lasciuit aut inmodico tumore turgescit aut inanibus locis bacchatur aut casuris si leuiter excutiantur flosculis nitet aut praecipitia pro sublimibus habet aut specie libertatis insanit, magis existimant populare atque plausibile. (Inst. 12.10.73)

“For those are very mistaken who think that this faulty and corrupted way of speaking – which either runs riot through the lasciviousness of the words or is lascivious through childish epigrams or is bloated through excessive affectation or revels in vain commonplaces or shines through little flowers which, if they are but slightly shaken, will fall off, or mistakes what is precipitous for what is sublime, or goes crazy with a fake freedom of speech – is more popular and likely to win applause.”

Again, we see Quintilian claiming interpretive authority and negating others’ ability to judge. *Puerilibus* makes the childishness of modernist style explicit, which is highlighted by *flosculis*: *floridus/flosculus* is employed for children’s speech.⁵⁶⁶ There may again be a Senecan echo:

⁵⁶⁵ Compare Ash 2017, 200 on the usefulness of humour for historiographical writers.

⁵⁶⁶ Edwards 2019, 301 points to the parallel. *Flosculus* appears at *Inst.* 6 *pr.* 10 and 10.5.23 for childish/youthful, at 2.5.22 for modernist style; *floridus* at 2.5.18 for a style appropriate for reading by the young. See Aßfahl 1932, 23 on the metaphor of craziness.

*Non tantum *** in genere sententiarum vitium est, si aut pusillae sunt et pueriles aut improbae et plus ausae quam pudore salvo licet, si floridae sunt et nimis dulces, si in vanum exeunt et sine effectu nihil amplius quam sonant.* (Sen. Ep. 114.16)

“The fault is not so much *** in the kind of epigrams, if they are either tiny and childish or wanton and daring more than shame allows for, if they florid and too sweet, if they amount to nothing and their effect goes no further than their sound.”

Despite the lacuna, Seneca’s passage seems similar to Quintilian’s.⁵⁶⁷ There are three lexical resemblances (*puerilibus–pueriles*, *sententiolis–sententiarum*, *flosculis–floridae*), and both authors are criticising a lack of restraint and the emptiness regarding contents.

As for prose rhythm, as seen above, Quintilian rejects its neglect by archaisers. After arguing that they do not understand that cultural development is a good thing, he adds:

Neque, si pravi pedes uim detrahunt rebus, ut sotadeorum et galliamborum et quorundam in oratione simili paene licentia lasciuientium, <id uitium> compositionis est iudicandum (Inst. 9.4.6)

“Nor, if corrupted rhythms weaken the force of things, like sotadeans and galliambics and any rhythms which are lascivious with almost similar licence, must this be thought to be the fault of [artful] composition as such.”

Differently from other passages in which he pairs archaism and modernism as two antithetical tendencies, here Quintilian only explicitly discusses archaisers’ rejection of *compositio*. But the words employed to deny that some authors’ corrupt *compositio* means it is, generally, a bad thing point to modernists (*licentia* and *lasciuire/lasciuia*).⁵⁶⁸ This could imply that archaisers, rejecting *compositio*, react to modernist excess. The lengthy introduction and self-positioning regarding Cicero (9.4.1-19: §2.1.1) may not just be Quintilian’s particularly insistent recommendation of his discussion, but an attempt to differentiate his position from that of modernists, of whom it is perceived as a defining feature. That this may indeed be the issue is also suggested by a remark near the end of the chapter:

⁵⁶⁷ Austin 1948, 209 remarks on this, without giving parallels.

⁵⁶⁸ See Morgan 2010, 94 and Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 741 on the pairing of these two metres as particularly exuberant and effeminate ones. See Dem. *Eloc.* 189, *Inst.* 1.8.6 on sotadeans. Mart. 2.86.1-5 pairs the *sotaden cinaedum* and the *mollem ... galliambum* as unmanly metres. Catull. 63, on Attis, is in galliambics, and Maecenas apparently wrote a poem *Cybele* in galliambics: see Edwards 2019, 290, who comments that this makes the remark at Sen. *Ep.* 19.9 that good fortune castrated Maecenas particularly trenchant.

In uniuersum autem, si sit necesse, duram potius atque asperam compositionem malim esse quam effeminatam et enervatam, qualis apud multos, et cotidie magis, lasciuissimis syntonorum modis saltat. (Inst. 9.4.142)

“In general, however, if it is necessary, I would prefer composition to be hard and rough rather than effeminate and enervated, as it is in many [speakers], and, more so each day, dances following the excessively lascivious tones of the *syntonum*.”

The ‘effeminate’ current is rejected.⁵⁶⁹ As regarding epigrams, Quintilian showcases his moderation by contrasting the two positions, and expresses his preference for the archaist, uncouth but masculine one. Similarly, modernist *actio* is described as exuberant, poetic and effeminate. Good recitation with the grammarian, that should be “manly and weighty with some sanctity” (*uirilis et sanctitate quadam grauis*), is contrasted with the “effeminate” (*effeminata*) one of many contemporary practitioners, going too much into the direction of poetry reading (1.8.2).⁵⁷⁰ Again, masculinity is connected to earnestness, effeminacy to lack of restraint.⁵⁷¹

Overall, modernists’ style is drawn as unrhetorical and unmanly, with excessively bold and poetic ornament. Like archaisers, they devote too much attention to words over content, but to opposite effect. Quintilian’s criticism of modernists however is more wide-ranging. He presents them as failing to engage properly in *inuentio* and *dispositio*, and in training generally. Of *narratio*, at 4.2.37 he writes that it is neglected “by most [speakers]” (*a plurimis*) who merely wish to please the crowd. Neglect of essential, if basic, information defines bad orators, as it does bad teachers. They are misled by their wish to show off before an uneducated crowd. We read something similar regarding *confirmatio*, namely that “most speakers are in the habit” (*Plerisque moris est*) of relating the order of the argument, and then immediately rushing to some “delightful topic, likely to win applause” (*laetum ac plausibilem locum*) that they can present to the audience’s pleasure. This tendency is explained thus:

Quod quidem natum ab ostentatione declamatoria iam in forum uenit, postquam agere causas non ad utilitatem litigatorum sed ad patronorum iactationem repertum est. (Inst. 4.3.1-2)

⁵⁶⁹ Abfahl 1932, 15 links *eneruis* to castration. See Adams 1982, 38; at *Inst.* 1.10.31, Quintilian says that the music played on stage is *effeminata et impudicis modis fracta*; this music is *fracta* like modernist style. Sen. *Dial.* 10.17.4 contrasts Scipio’s old-fashioned, virile dancing with effeminate contemporary dancing. As Sciarrino 2011, 107 writes, Quintilian constructs an opposition between ancient and modern, masculine and effeminate.

⁵⁷⁰ See the similar wording on *compositio* at Sen. *Ep.* 46.2 (*uirilis et sancta*). Colson 1924, 105 points to Cic. *Orat.* 57 as well as *De or.* 3.98 and *Inst.* 9.3.58 for further development of this thought; Spalding 1798-1816, I 193 refers to Plin. *HN* 16.66 and Theophr. *Caus. plant.* 4.12. Similarly, the child’s musical training should eschew the corrupted music now sung on stage (*Inst.* 1.10.31).

⁵⁷¹ See Connolly 2009, 135 on Quintilian, like Cicero, encouraging a ‘naturally’ masculine attitude.

“This habit, born from declamatory ostentatiousness, has now reached the forum; since then, people have started to lead their cases not for the sake of the litigants, but rather for that of the patrons’ showing off.”

Neglect of contents, wish for display and declamatory practice are linked. Leading cases not for the sake of the client, but for their own, these speakers do the opposite of what a good orator (and teacher) should do. Similarly, we are told that artificial proofs are “mostly” (*plerumque*) neglected, or just barely touched upon, by those who “avoid proofs just as if they were rough and difficult and settle on more pleasant topics” (5.8.1: *argumenta uelut horrida et confragosa uitantes amoenioribus locis desident*).⁵⁷² But proofs are essential to make a case. The absurdity of this habit is highlighted thus:

... neque aliter quam ii qui traduntur a poetis gustu cuiusdam apud Lotophagos graminis et Sirenum cantu deleniti uoluptatem saluti praetulisse, dum laudis falsam imaginem persecuntur ipsa propter quam dicitur uictoria cedunt. (Inst. 5.8.1)

“... and no different from those who are reported by the poets to have preferred pleasure to safety, enticed by the taste of some herb among the Lotus-eaters and by the song of Sirens, these [speakers] concede the victory itself for the sake of which one speaks, while they pursue the false mirage of praise.”

Through the comparison with the Homeric men misled by the mirage of drugs or of song, these speakers are positively delusional, forgetting about the defining feature of oratory, its competitive character, and giving up on victory (§3.2.1). They are like failed epic heroes, whose lack of self-control prevents them from completing their journey. Their failure to grasp the purpose of forensic oratory in turn reflects their lack of proper training and failed educational journey. And since this journey aims to make ‘real men’ and ‘fighters’ out of them (see Introduction, §§3.2.1-2), they can be said to have failed to become ‘real men’ themselves. This is made literal in a very purple passage towards the end of the treatment of *argumentatio* (5.12.17-23). The ‘effeminate’ declamatory orators are compared to castrated boys – a passage which is an exciting reward for readers who made their way through the long, technical treatment of *argumentatio*.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷² Russell 2005, 266 cites this passage as one instance in which Quintilian switches to a higher register for the sake of polemic. A comparable pairing of Lotus-eaters and Sirens can be found at Ov. *Rem. am.* 789-90, underpinning the advice that the deceived lover should go past the house of his beloved quickly.

⁵⁷³ See Spalding 1798-1816, vol. 2, 358, who comments on the harshness of this comparison. As Edwards 2019, 290 writes, this is the most graphic expression of the tendency to describe faulty writing to an effeminated body. See also Möller 2003, 205-6 on this passage and on the remark at Sen. *Ep.* 114.6 that Maecenas was accompanied by two eunuchs who were more manly than he was, and on the negative implications of castration.

As already mentioned, scholars have shown that Quintilian maintains the usefulness of declamation as an exercise, but criticises contemporary practice for not preparing pupils for the real deal, forensic activity (see §3.1.3). In the chapter following the purple passage just cited, Quintilian again criticises the distance of such declaimers from forensic reality: they must be reminded not to devise easy arguments pretending that they will have a stupid adversary (5.13.42). He corroborates the point through an anecdote about the tragedian Accius:

Aiunt Accium interrogatum cur causas non ageret cum apud eum in tragoediis tanta uis esset hanc reddidisse rationem, quod illic ea dicerentur quae ipse uellet, in foro dicturi aduersarii essent quae minime uellet. (Inst. 5.13.44)

“They say that Accius, asked why he did not plead cases when there was so much [rhetorical] forcefulness in his tragedies, gave the reason that there those things were said that he himself wanted, while in the forum, opponents were going to say what he least wanted them to say.”

The parallel structure created by the epiphora of *uellet* and the polyptoton of *dicere* underlines the contrast between the two genres, of which Accius, unlike these speakers, is aware. They plead in court, but like poets: they aim to please, not to win.⁵⁷⁴ At the root of this problem lies the importation of declamatory habits into the forum, the neglect of the boundaries between play and real world:

Incidunt tamen plerique in hoc uitium uel consuetudine declamatoria uel etiam cupiditate dicendi, dantque de se respondentibus uenustissimos lusus. (Inst. 5.13.46)

“Most fall into this mistake out of declamatory habit or also out of their eagerness in speaking, and allow those replying to them to make the funniest jokes about themselves.”

They appear as stupid, while their adversaries receive the opportunity to prove their urbanity; social sanction by peers through laughter (see §2.2.2) is what they will get in the forum, instead of the applause they are used to. Wide popularity does not equal good style, but also not forensic success.

These passages in which Quintilian describes contemporary orators’ neglect of *inuentio* for the sake of declamatory (dis-)play seem to concern only modernists, who thus receive a more wide-ranging criticism than archaisers. That he presents modernism as the predominant current also appears from the fact that, whenever he signals that he is making some concession to changed modern tastes, he clearly

⁵⁷⁴ The focus on *delectatio* is, as Hömke 2009, 248 writes, characteristic of declamation. Cf. *De or.* 2.100 on the mock-forensic cases treated in schools being easy.

goes in the direction of modernism.⁵⁷⁵ To give a few examples, he justifies recommending a more florid *exordium* than earlier authors would have allowed for by pointing to the changed tastes of contemporary judges, who want to be entertained (4.1.57), and says something similar about *narratio* (4.2.24). When describing modernist tendencies, he usually frames them as widespread (*plerique/plerumque*). At 12.10.47, the bodily imagery prominent at the start of book 8 returns in the formulation of a concession to his times' more refined tastes:

... *do tempori, ne hirta toga sit, non ut serica, ne intonsum caput, non <ut> in gradus atque anulos comptum ...* (*Inst.* 12.10.47)

“... I concede to the times that the toga should not be shaggy, but not a silken one, nor the head unshorn, but not like one combed into waves and ringlets ...”

Quintilian then directly relates this concession to the use of epigrams.⁵⁷⁶ He makes clear that he does not reject modern ornament, but advocates moderation. Also regarding performance, he remarks that a “slightly more lively” (*paulo exagitatione*) mode has established itself since older times (11.3.184). In all these instances, Quintilian marks his effort to take a balanced stance, contributing to his persona as a moderate and well-informed man. His awareness of, and concessions to, changed tastes show that he does not simply promote an anachronistic neo-Ciceronian rhetoric,⁵⁷⁷ but that he strives to adapt it to contemporary tastes, which are primarily modernist.⁵⁷⁸

Quintilian's defence of his educational project at *Inst.* 2.12 confirms this impression. He rejects the purportedly widespread opinion that the “uneducated” (*indocti*) speak more forcefully, attributing it to “the mistake of those who judge poorly” (2.12.1: *uitio male iudicantium*). Once again, he links speakers and crowds based on their ignorance. He characterizes these speakers' style through metaphors of uncontrolled violence (2.12.2). They are like wrestlers and gladiators who instead of channelling their forces throw themselves into the fight and are defeated either by their own impetus or by the adversary's weaker but well-directed response (2.12.3). Quintilian concedes: *Sed sunt in hac parte quae imperitos etiam naturaliter fallant* (2.12.3: “But there are indeed elements in this approach that may naturally deceive the uneducated”). Physical metaphors yield to a stylistic description: lack of polish

⁵⁷⁵ See Parks 1945, 48 on Quintilian's awareness of the public's preferences, and Nauta 2007, 4-5 on how Marcus Aper in Tac. *Dial.* 19ff. connects changes in oratory to changes in the audiences' tastes. Compare Tac. *Hist.* 1.18.2-3 on the excessive, old-fashioned severity of Galba's speech making it ineffective.

⁵⁷⁶ As Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 937 remarks, it appears here that Quintilian does make concessions to modern tastes. See Tac. *Dial.* 26.2, where Messala complains about the un-manly contemporary style, connecting it with a theatrical mode, in similar terms; a paragraph earlier, he had contrasted unrefined archaic oratory with corrupted modern style, pitching Cato and the Gracchi against Maecenas and Gallio (26.1).

⁵⁷⁷ As stated e.g. by Estefanía 1998, 890.

⁵⁷⁸ As Fögen 2000, 155-56 writes, Quintilian's conception of literary development belies the idea that he pleads for a purely neo-Ciceronian style. However, Fögen's statement that Quintilian is “sehr wohlwollend” towards contemporary developments of oratory does not quite consider the criticism of contemporary currents.

and of cohesive structure wrongly make them appear more forceful; again, this perception is attributed to the ignorant (2.12.3). Both orators and fans appear as unable to tell apart virtues and vices. Furthermore, such unorganized violence holds the concrete danger of damaging the client, or the speaker himself (2.12.4). The chapter is pervaded by a differentiation between the success that such orators have with the public and the failure which they deserve, and indeed encounter, in court. They avoid the argumentative core of speeches to avoid the “chill” (*frigus*) of their reception by the public, only striving to please through “corrupt pleasures” (2.12.6: *prauis uoluptatibus*). This wish for popular acclaim and neglect of argumentation is, as seen above, attributed to modernists. That Quintilian is indeed speaking about them appears from his remark that *sententiae* are their only concern, and only stand out because everything else is squalid and low; not as lights are lighter among shadows, as Cicero says (*De or.* 3.101), but rather among pitch black darkness (2.12.7). He adds:

Itaque ingeniosi uocentur, ut libet, dum tamen constet contumeliose sic laudari disertum. (Inst. 2.12.7)

“Thus, they may be called ingenious, if they like, if only it is clear that it would be offensive to praise a learned man like this.”

The epithet is clearly ironical. Once again, we are reminded that children should be praised for their talent (3.7.15), not adults.⁵⁷⁹ And further, Quintilian highlights the violence of these speakers’ performance: they shout and bellow out everything with a lifted hand, with much running about, panting, jerking movement, shaking their head like crazy (2.12.9); nowadays, he adds, clapping hands, stamping, hitting one’s leg, breast and forehead makes a great impression “on the common crowd” (*ad pullatum circulum*; compare 6.4.6). They live for the show, while the good orator prefers “to both be and to appear modest” (2.12.10: *modestus et esse et uideri malit*).⁵⁸⁰ They are over the top and neglect the basic rule of aptness that style should be adapted to content.⁵⁸¹ Their claim to speak well without training is problematic from a didactic perspective. Indeed, Quintilian notes that there are even teachers who, “having completed a brief training in speaking” (*breuem dicendi exercitationem consecuti*), start ranting at random, attacking those who keep education in higher esteem (2.12.11). He ironically congratulates “those who are learned without any effort, method, or art” (2.12.12: *sine labore, sine ratione, sine disciplina disertis*).⁵⁸² He ends *Inst.* 2.12 by contraposing his own industrious career and

⁵⁷⁹ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 192-93; as they say, it is not meant in a complimentary way.

⁵⁸⁰ Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 196 point to Cic. *De or.* 2.228 for a similar construction.

⁵⁸¹ A similar description of popular orators’ *actio* is given at *Inst.* 11.1.29: it is *impudens, tumultuosa, iracunda*. We have already seen at §2.1.1 that Quintilian dismisses clapping as unseemly. He repeatedly describes such speakers as wranglers: 6.4.13; 9.4.37; 11.3.121; 11.3.172.

⁵⁸² Cf. also Kennerly 2019, 135 on the criticism at *Inst.* 2.11.3 of such speakers’ un-methodical preparation.

didactic mission in retirement to these speakers and teachers.⁵⁸³ In *Inst.* 10.7, he similarly criticises those who deem themselves proficient without training, ending with a quip: “some declaimers” (*declamatores quosdam*) think so; “but eloquence laughs at those who are so insolent towards her, and those who want to appear learned to the ignorant, appear ignorant to the learned” (10.7.21: *sed tam contumeliosos in se ridet inuicem eloquentia, et qui stultis uideri eruditi uolunt, stulti eruditis uidentur*).

Overall, it appears that modernism figures in the *Institutio* as the chief contemporary current of corrupt style. Like archaisers, modernists (reportedly) have a wrong interpretation of what is ‘natural’: archaisers think that old Latin style, modernists think that lack of training makes for natural speech, which does not prevent them from lavishing effort on epigrams. Both groups focus on words over content and lose sight of the goal of forensic oratory, victory. While archaisers are too exclusive and barely understood, modernists, influenced by declamatory practice, strive too hard for popular acclaim. Quintilian clarifies that popular acclaim does not equal actual success: the crowd may cheer, but this will not help against real adversaries: applause is the wrong criterion to measure success. Taking this stance, Quintilian once again claims interpretive authority for himself, and avoids his remarks about the popularity of this current being read as an admission of its effectiveness.

As is well known, Michael Winterbottom has argued that Quintilian’s modernists stand for the *delatores*, and that his conception of the ideal orator should be read as a reaction against them and the idea that one can be successful without training.⁵⁸⁴ To the first point, perhaps one could object that despite the ‘violence’ attributed to them in *Inst.* 2.12, a lack of success in their forensic activity is consistently part of their depiction.⁵⁸⁵ Regardless of the question whether modernists hide the real-world *delatores* or whether it is just the general emphasis on the ethical side of the orator that points to them, Quintilian’s criticism of modernists certainly betrays an educational preoccupation. Their neglect of training goes against the very essence of his programme, based on diligence. Adapting themselves to the crowd instead of improving its tastes as a good orator should do (see §2.1.1) and perpetuating their style through teaching, they can be made responsible for a downward spiral of stylistic and moral corruption. They are dangerous because they corrupt the uneducated – the crowd but also children, the next generation of orators. As in his criticism of philosophers, Quintilian’s sharpness is due to a didactic concern. This explains why he depicts archaism as the lesser of the two evils. He might have argued differently, had he known it would become the preponderant current of the Antonine age.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ See Reinhardt and Winterbottom 2006, 197 on this contraposition.

⁵⁸⁴ Winterbottom 1964, 95.

⁵⁸⁵ In Tacitus, *delatores* are successful enough to disrupt powerful senatorial families and amass fabulous wealth. Pliny the Younger reports that Regulus differentiated his own speaking from Pliny’s thus: ‘*Tu omnia quae sunt in causa putas exsequenda; ego iugulum statim uideo, hunc premo*’ (*Ep.* 1.20.14). This is far from inconclusive. Pliny’s follow-up however fits Quintilian’s depiction of modernists as lacking judgement: *Premi sane quod elegit, sed in eligendo frequenter errat* (*Ep.* 1.20.14).

⁵⁸⁶ Still, as Goldberg 1987, 367 writes, Quintilian’s distrust of archaism is shrewd insofar as it was indeed soon to become the leading literary current of the following century.

4.2 Quintilian on Seneca the Younger

4.2.1 Evaluating Seneca (*Inst.* 10.1.125-31)

Throughout the *Institutio*, as seen above, Quintilian draws a consistent picture of two different currents of corrupt oratory, creating a negative foil against which he sets his portrait of the ideal orator. In doing so, he may be said to perform the kind of apotroptic exemplarity he recommends to teachers: his readers will be able to detect and avoid bad style. The engagement in such a literary debate may also be said to reinforce his emulation of Cicero, and allows him to showcase his judgement. In this section, I will discuss his most famous evaluation of a single author, that of Seneca the Younger in *Inst.* 10.1.46-131. I will argue that Quintilian showcases his persona as a reasonable man by alternating praise and criticism, but undermines Seneca as a didactic figure, literary critic, and stylist, portraying him similarly to modernists. In the next section, I will discuss one other mention of Seneca in the *Institutio* and propose that his portrayal may have not only literary, but also political implications. I will suggest that Quintilian, tying Seneca to modernism, is anachronistically relegating this current of contemporary corruption (moral and stylistic), which as seen above he depicts as the dominant one, to the Neronian past, and presenting his project as introducing a shift away from the past towards the Flavian present.

Quintilian starts his appraisal of Seneca by saying that he purposefully left it for the end of the overview:

Ex industria Senecam in omni genere eloquentiae distuli, propter uulgatam falso de me opinionem qua damnare eum et inuisum quoque habere sum creditus. (Inst. 10.1.125)

“I purposefully set Seneca after [my discussion of] every kind of eloquence, because of the wrongly diffused opinion about me, according to which I have been believed to damn and even to hate him.”

This concern with his own reception by the public is a recurrent one, as already seen (1 *pr.* 7; 1.12.16-17, §§1.1.2; 3.1.1).⁵⁸⁷ As in 1 *pr.* 7, Quintilian announces what follows as his actual stance, as opposed to its inaccurate representation by others. Hinting at a controversy he expects readers to know of, he depicts them as part of the same cultural environment that is his and Seneca’s.⁵⁸⁸ Their inclusion in the picture, within a markedly polemical opening, seems like a powerful way to stir their interest, adding topicality to what he is about to write.⁵⁸⁹ The position itself of the passage is prominent, as he highlights

⁵⁸⁷ See Whitton 2019, 488-89 on Quintilian’s concern, and Pliny’s allusion to it in *Ep.* 1.2.1.

⁵⁸⁸ Compare Ovid’s rejection, at *Rem. am.* 361-62, of misinterpretations of the *Ars amatoria* by readers who took offence ignoring the fact that his is a *Musa iocosa*.

⁵⁸⁹ As Dominik 1997, 55 writes, Quintilian clearly expects his readers to recall the controversy, and the heaviness of the criticism undermines the praise. See *Inst.* 4.1.34 on how to stir the judges’ interest by saying something that regards them personally.

himself.⁵⁹⁰ Not only is he aware of the public's opinion, as a good orator should be, but the public is implied to also be aware of him, sufficiently so to gossip about his stance towards Seneca. Dismissing the circulating opinion as false, he denies negative bias and increases the authoritativeness of the ensuing evaluation (compare §1.2.2). He then specifies the temporal framework of the controversy:

Quod accidit mihi dum corruptum et omnibus uitiis fractum dicendi genus reuocare ad seueriora iudicia contendo: tum autem solus hic fere in manibus adulescentium fuit. (Inst. 10.1.125)

“This happened to me as I was trying to bring back the style of speaking, corrupt and enervated through all sorts of vices, to a more earnest standard: back then, however, he was almost the only author in the hands of boys.”

The description of this style as corrupt and ‘enervated’ by vices recalls descriptions of the modernist style, as does the youthfulness of Seneca’s readers, contrasted with the (adult) earnestness of judgement Quintilian was trying to reinstate.⁵⁹¹ Considering Quintilian’s stance that the opinions of the ignorant, who include children, are worth less than those of the learned (§3.2.2), calling Seneca’s fans *adulescentes* clearly discredits their positive evaluation of him.⁵⁹² The remark that he was everywhere seemingly as an explanation, but in a main sentence without a proper causal marker, establishes a tight link between him and the widespread corruption: Quintilian may have been criticising contemporary style generally, but this was interpreted as an attack against the Neronian author.⁵⁹³ Collapsing Seneca the author and Seneca the book, Quintilian shifts the focus from a personal level to a literary-critical one, which supports his claim to impartiality. The *dum*-clause (*dum ... reuocare ... contendo*) suggest a controversy building up over time, rather than a single episode, and the presentation of Seneca’s popularity as a widespread phenomenon connects it to this peak of corruption.⁵⁹⁴ But when would that have been? An earlier passage gives some clarification. Complaining about the wrong approach to declamation and the craze for shallow epigrams (9.2.76-80), Quintilian writes:

⁵⁹⁰ Rocheblave 1890, 39 and Laureys 1991, 100 remark on the prominent position and remarkable length at which Quintilian treats Seneca.

⁵⁹¹ See Möller 2003, 247 on the echo of Sen. *Ep.* 114.1 here. According to Laureys 1991, 123, Quintilian through the past tense signals that he managed to contain Seneca’s influence, and is ready to evaluate him “more objectively and more honestly”. I would disagree: the prominent position of the discussion and the links to his critique of modernism show that he still regards Seneca as relevant.

⁵⁹² As Fairweather 1981, 27 writes, Seneca the Younger and his brothers, addressed by their father in the *Controuersiae*, also figure as youths interested foremost in *sententiae*, but this seems due to literary convention.

⁵⁹³ Suet. *Calig.* 53.2 reports Caligula’s biting judgement of Seneca’s style, and highlights Seneca’s popularity at that time (*Senecam tum maxime placentem*). Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.1 remarks that Seneca’s style suited his times.

⁵⁹⁴ See Trillitzsch 1971, 63 on the connection with Seneca. Gelzer 1970, 217 and Heldmann 1980, 20 assume that Quintilian is referring to his *De causis corruptae eloquentiae*. This would not fit chronologically (see §1.2.2), and Russell 2001, vol. 4, 319 rejects the idea.

Atqui praecipue prima quibus praecipere coeperam tempora hoc uitio laborarunt: dicebant enim libenter tales controuersias. (Inst. 9.2.77)

“But it was chiefly the early days of my teaching which were affected by this vice: for [speakers] liked to perform such *controuersiae*.”

Following our information that Quintilian arrived in Rome in 69 CE with Galba and was granted a public salary by Vespasian, the early days of his teaching career at Rome would be the early seventies CE.⁵⁹⁵ This is the same period as that of the fictional date of the *Dialogus de oratoribus*, 75 CE, a time of political and cultural re-orientation after the civil wars, and would have been a moment when Seneca’s style was fresh in everyone’s memory.⁵⁹⁶ This makes the hypothesis attractive that Quintilian is pointing to the early Flavian period as the heyday of corruption.

In book 10, after drawing attention to his treatment of Seneca, Quintilian gives some more information about this controversy:

Quem non equidem omnino conabar excitere, sed potioribus praeferri non sinebam, quos ille non destiterat incessere, cum diuersi sibi conscius generis placere se in dicendo posse quibus illi placerent diffideret. Amabant autem eum magis quam imitabantur, tantumque ab illo defluebant quantum ille ab antiquis descenderat. Foret enim optandum pares ac saltem proximos illi uiro fieri. Sed placebat propter sola uitia, et ad ea se quisque dirigebat effingenda quae poterat: deinde cum se iactaret eodem modo dicere, Senecam infamabat. (Inst. 10.1.126)

“I for my part was not trying to shake him off completely, but I did not allow him to be preferred to better [authors], whom he had never stopped attacking, because – being aware that his style differed from theirs – he did not believe that he could be liked by those who liked them. But they [the youths] loved him more than they [successfully] imitated him, and they fell as much below him as he had fallen below the old authors. One would have hoped that they should become equal or at least similar to that man. But they liked him just because of his vices, and everyone tried to reproduce all the vices that he could: then, when boasting that they spoke just like him, they defamed Seneca.”

⁵⁹⁵ As Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 502 note, Quintilian is complaining about the tendency to make transparent the *maledicendi uoluntas*.

⁵⁹⁶ See Mayer 2001, 17; 142 on this fictional date of the *Dialogus*. Kragelund 2012, 495-96 argues that the Maternus of the *Dialogus* is the same one who is reported to have been executed under Domitian for speaking against the tyrants (Cass. Dio 67.12.5) and refers to the precedent of Plato and Cicero for setting of dialogues at a dramatic date on the eve of political crisis or death of a protagonist, lending weight to his words: Pl. *Phd.* 84e-85b, Cic. *De or.* 3.6.

Quintilian claims that he was not even trying to ban Seneca completely; the physical verb *excutere*, shaking off, suggests forcing the readers to drop the book, as if it was a bad thing, and supports the earlier image that ‘he’ (Seneca) was in everyone’s hands.⁵⁹⁷ The incompetence of Seneca’s young fans is now made explicit. They attempt, but fail, to emulate him, and disgrace him by boasting that they speak like him. As Joachim Gelzer writes, they figure as bad imitators: they try to reproduce a single model instead of appropriating the best qualities of many, and accordingly produce a lesser version of the original.⁵⁹⁸ The idea that his vices are what makes Seneca popular and what his imitators try to reproduce resonates with Quintilian’s presentation of modernists and of the workings of bad imitation (§§4.1.1; 4.1.3).⁵⁹⁹ The fact that Seneca is liked by incompetent crowds casts a shadow on him: as we have seen above, according to Quintilian, crowds tend to judge poorly. This is a rather ironical, and damning, position considering Seneca’s own emphasis on the superiority of the judgement of the competent few over that of the many (§3.2.2). Quintilian may be said to adopt a position akin to Seneca’s and to turn it against him; the insistence on Seneca’s popularity likely entails an ironical quip against the philosopher’s pleading for seclusion.⁶⁰⁰ Furthermore, an important element of Senecan self-representation is undermined, his posing as a teacher.⁶⁰¹

But is he made responsible for his imitators’ failure as well? This seems to be the point of the comment that he denigrated earlier authors to change the public’s opinion of them, and conversely also of himself.⁶⁰² The focus on Seneca’s literary criticism indicates that his prose rather than his poetry is in question, perhaps especially his *Letters to Lucilius*, in which it is a prominent theme. This hypothesis is backed by Gell. *NA* 12.2. Gellius presents a similar evaluation of Seneca, commenting on his criticism of Ennius, Vergil and Cicero in a now lost *Letter*.⁶⁰³ Like Quintilian, Gellius showcases impartiality, refusing to pass judgement (*NA* 12.2.2).⁶⁰⁴ He then discusses Seneca’s reception of Cicero’s praise of verses by Ennius. The verses in question are about Cethegus: ‘*is dictust ollis popularibus olim, / qui tum*

⁵⁹⁷ *TLL excutio*: 5.2.1310.21-65.

⁵⁹⁸ Peterson 1891, 121 reads the counterfactual wish that they should have become similar to Seneca as an expression of Quintilian’s high opinion of him. Gelzer 1970, 218-19 contrarily argues that the qualities which Seneca is praised for are useless for the student, as they are precisely those posited as inimitable at *Inst.* 10.2.12.

⁵⁹⁹ See Gelzer 1970, 214-15 on this section as a polemic *excursus* leading from the discussion of different authors as models for *imitatio* (10.1) to the theoretical chapter on *imitatio* (10.2).

⁶⁰⁰ For Hömke 2002, 49, Quintilian’s criticism of Seneca can be explained foremost through the stance taken by the latter in the *Letters* (100.6; 114.13) that new thoughts need a new form of expression, and his emphasis on the importance of adapting style to one’s own talents. Russell 2002, vol. 4, 321 comments that Quintilian seems to take a prejudiced view of Seneca’s tastes.

⁶⁰¹ See Griffin 1976, 3. Seneca in the *Letters* styles himself both as a didactic figure and as a fellow sick man striving for improvement: see e.g. *Ep.* 6.4 (sharing knowledge makes it more precious); 8.2 (being eager to prevent others from making his own past mistakes); 34.1 (claiming the merit for Lucilius’ progress: *Adsero te mihi; meum opus es*); 35.1 (encouraging Lucilius to study). Compare *Dial.* 7.17.3.

⁶⁰² For Heldmann 1980, 15, Quintilian’s critique of Seneca’s attacks against *potiores* can indeed be explained through Seneca’s own critical practice.

⁶⁰³ As Holford-Strevens 2003, 276-77 writes, this discussion of Seneca is the only one devoted to a Silver Age writer by Gellius. See similarly the criticism at *NA* 2.6 of commentators criticising Vergil. Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 937 remarks that Quintilian’s criticism of Seneca is less harsh than Gellius’ and Fronto’s.

⁶⁰⁴ For Romano 1902, 46, Gellius agrees with the latter current, and does not relate Seneca’s stylistic deficiencies to his character.

uiuebant homines atque aeuum agitabant, / flos delibatus populi Suada<eque> medulla.' (Gell. NA 12.2.3; Enn. Ann. frg. 308 Vahlen: "he was once called by the people, / who back then lived and restlessly spent their life / the chosen flower of the people and the marrow of Persuasion").⁶⁰⁵ Gellius reports Seneca's criticism as follows:

'Admiror eloquentissimos uiros et deditos Ennio pro optimis ridicula laudasse. Cicero certe inter bonos eius uersus et hos refert'. Atque id etiam de Cicerone dicit: 'Non miror' inquit 'fuisse, qui hos uersus scriberet, cum fuerit, qui laudaret; nisi forte Cicero summus orator agebat causam suam et uolebat suos uersus uideri bonos.' (Gell. NA 12.2.5)

"I wonder why very eloquent men, and ones who were great admirers of Ennius, praised ridiculous lines instead of his best ones. Cicero for one reports, among good verses, also these'. And he also says this about Cicero: 'I do not wonder', he states, 'that there was someone who wrote these verses, since there was someone who praised them; unless perhaps Cicero, the most distinguished orator, was acting in his own interest and wanted his own verses to seem good.'"

Seneca (reportedly) marks the speculation as plausible through *nisi forte*.⁶⁰⁶ *Causam agere*, here standing in the sense of promoting one's interest, can denote legal action and thus may hint at Cicero's forensic activity.⁶⁰⁷ The double-entendre would then suggest that as a critic, Cicero defended Ennius' worst verses to let his own appear in a better light.⁶⁰⁸ Seneca appears to mock, with sharp wit, Cicero as a clever lawyer, dishonest critic, and self-conscious bad poet. Later in the chapter, the allegedly neutral Gellius explicitly disapproves of Seneca for his evaluations of Vergil and Ennius, calling him a "trifling man" (12.2.8: *homo nugator*).⁶⁰⁹ Like Quintilian, Gellius finds fault with Seneca's critical practice. Furthermore, he reports two different stances on Seneca: some criticise his style for being "common" (*uulgaris*), and his learning "banal and ordinary" (*uernacula et plebeia*), while "others ... say that he does not lack, even in criticising moral vices, a severity and earnestness which is not without charm" (12.2.1: *alii ... non deesse dicunt et in uitiiis morum obiurgandis seueritatem grauitatemque non inuenustam*). Gellius starts the passage by highlighting Seneca's popularity and ethical stance and ends it with a pedagogical twist: reading Seneca is not good for young men, even if there are some good elements in his writings, there are more bad ones which could influence them negatively (12.2.12-13).

⁶⁰⁵ See on these verses Beare 1926, 192. Enn. Ann. 304 Sk. instead writes: '*... is dictus popularibus ollis / Qui tum uiuebant homines atque aeuom agitabant / Flos delibatus populi Suadaique medulla*', following Cicero's (*Brut.* 58) instead of Gellius' manuscript tradition: Skutsch 1985, 483.

⁶⁰⁶ Compare Tacitus' ironical insertion of such supplementary speculations through *nisi forte*, as in *Hist.* 3.66.3; 4.74, *Ann.* 2.33; 3.55; 14.56. See Menge 2007, 253, §381.2 on the ironical tone of this juncture.

⁶⁰⁷ OLD *ago* 42b and c.

⁶⁰⁸ Quintilian himself, when reviewing definitions of rhetoric, rejects this Ennian juncture (*Inst.* 2.15.4).

⁶⁰⁹ See on the negative connotations of *homo* as opposed to *uir* in Cicero's political invective Santoro L'Hoir 1992, 21-28.

Seneca, according to Gellius, mocks Cicero on the same grounds on which he himself is condemned by Quintilian. Mentioning Seneca's criticism of earlier authors together with his adoration by the crowds, Quintilian, like Seneca, appears to imply that his literary critical stance is self-interested. If the implication indeed is that Seneca promotes his own work, enticing youths to imitate only himself, this makes him responsible for his imitators' failure.

Quintilian then praises Seneca's natural disposition, studiousness, and knowledge. But he partly retracts his praise by specifying that sometimes, Seneca was misled by his informants (*Inst.* 10.1.128). This takes away responsibility from him for mistakes but implies that he employed assistants instead of gathering the materials himself and did not check their veracity, thus proceeding inaccurately and lazily. This is yet another element recalling modernist speakers, who are said to rely on information provided by others (§3.2.1).⁶¹⁰ Quintilian adds that Seneca treated almost every possible subject matter in a number of genres (orations, poems, epistles and dialogues), and that in the philosophical works he was not careful enough, but an excellent "persecutor of vices" (10.1.129: *uitiorum insectator*).⁶¹¹ This, as just seen, is one thing Seneca was praised for according to Gellius. The focus now unequivocally lies on his prose rather than on his poetry. Concerning his style, Quintilian writes:

Multae in eo claraeque sententiae, multa etiam morum gratia legenda, sed in eloquendo corrupta pleraque, atque eo perniciosissima quod abundant dulcibus uitiiis. Velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno iudicio: nam si aliqua contempsisset, si ¶parum¶ non concupisset, si non omnia sua amasset, si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset, consensu potius eruditorum quam puerorum amore comprobaretur. (Inst. 10.1.129-30)

"In his works there are many, and outstanding, epigrams, also much that should be read for the sake of morals, but in his elocution, most [elements] are corrupt, and very dangerous because they are full of sweet vices. You would wish that he had spoken with his own talent, someone else's judgement: for if he had rejected some elements, if he had not striven for too ¶little¶,⁶¹² if he had not loved all that he wrote, if he had not broken down the weightiness of the contents through the tiniest epigrams, he would be approved by the consensus of the learned rather than by the love of boys."

⁶¹⁰ Peterson 1891, 121 refers the statement that Seneca was misled by his sources to natural philosophy; Trillitzsch 1971, 64 similarly thinks the *QNat* are in question. In *Ep.* 79.1, for instance, Seneca asks Lucilius to tell him about Sicily, especially about Charybdis, which however serves to kick off the discussion in the *Letter*.

⁶¹¹ There is an interesting parallel with the evaluation of Alcaeus regarding the combination of moral reproachfulness and stylistic licentiousness (*Inst.* 10.1.63).

⁶¹² Russell 2001, vol. 4, 321 reads *si prava non* and translates: "if he had not had a longing for the perverse"; Winterbottom chooses *parum*, which could be read as "too little" in the sense of "too little that is serious or otherwise valuable". See also Kennerly 2019, 131 on this stylistic criticism of Seneca.

Quintilian praises *sententiae* as the one outstanding feature of Seneca's writing, standing out from his corrupt style. Their sweetness clearly recalls modernist style,⁶¹³ and the epigrams themselves, as a linear reader would already know, are themselves problematic since they are the key pursuit of modernists.⁶¹⁴ And in case an inattentive reader should have forgotten this, they are explicitly cast as disruptive in the next sentence. Seneca's 'enervated' fragmentation of meaning through epigrams corresponds to what modernists do. This stylistic criticism undermines the praise of his earnest philosophical posturing; as seen above, tiny epigrams are said to lack, and destroy, seriousness. Indeed, the link later established between a man's speech and his life may make the linear reader (at least the linear reader detecting the similarity between *Inst.* 11.1.30 and *Sen. Ep.* 114.1) wonder whether there is a discrepancy between form and content of Seneca's speech, and whether this discrepancy undermines the content.

The counterfactual wish that Seneca should have spoken with his own talent, but with someone else's ability to judge, points to another characteristic of modernists, lack of *iudicium*.⁶¹⁵ The statement that if Seneca had overcome his faults, he would have been approved of by the consensus of the learned rather than by the love of boys, implies that, as he did not, it was indeed just boys who loved him. The description of the admirers as *adulescentes* creates the impression that they are inexperienced and not capable of sound judgement yet. This is confirmed by the fact that they are contrasted with the *consensus eruditorum*. This also recalls the criticism of modernists.⁶¹⁶ The boys lack judgement, and so does Seneca.⁶¹⁷ This lack of *iudicium* definitively discredits Seneca's literary criticism, and the enumeration of the negative consequences that its lack is said to have had on his writing functions as a negative example proving its importance. Furthermore, as *iudicium* is set as crucial not only for speaking, but for any domain of ethical life, its absence is also problematic for Seneca's role as a *uitiorum insectator* and writer on ethics.⁶¹⁸ As Yasuko Taoka has shown, Quintilian's criticism echoes Seneca's own description of Maecenas as a man of good *ingenium*, but too little judgement.⁶¹⁹ It also recalls Quintilian's own and

⁶¹³ For Aßfahl 1932, 16, the description of the vices as sweet is a concession, but it seems part of the indictment. Edwards 2019, 25 remarks that even in the *Institutio*, Seneca is praised as a *uitiorum insectator* and for his *sententiae*, which implies that Quintilian is critical towards him; one could add that the praise is double-edged.

⁶¹⁴ See also Kennerly 2019, 131 on this stylistic criticism of Seneca.

⁶¹⁵ As Adamietz 1986, 2230; 2234 comments, Quintilian does not condemn *sententiae* generally, but Seneca's use of them. Culver 1967, 26 is I think right in stating that Quintilian attempts to moderate Seneca's stylistic influence on his pupils, even if saying that he perceives Seneca as an "anarchist" seems somewhat incongruous.

⁶¹⁶ As Dominik 1997, 53-55 writes, Quintilian's criticism of corrupt contemporary style at *Inst.* 8.5.13; 12.10.73 recalls his criticism of Seneca, and Lucilius corresponds to the type of youthful imitator Quintilian draws. See also Citroni 2017, 45 on Quintilian trying to fight aberrant stylistic tendencies like Seneca's modernism, and Bloomer 2015, 355 on his indictment of Seneca as a bad stylistic model.

⁶¹⁷ See *Inst.* 10.3.7 on *emendatio*: we like all that we produce at first, but we must rework it, cutting it back.

⁶¹⁸ See *Inst.* 6.5.11: *Illud dicere satis habeo, nihil esse non modo in orando sed in omni uita prius consilio*. As Pennacini 2001, vol. 2, 907 writes, Quintilian's criticism of Seneca's style has an ethical edge. Griffin 1976, 8 notes that Quintilian implies that Seneca focuses on style over content and that this lost him the respect of the *eruditi*, but thinks his criticism is undermined by his respect for Cicero's style and contempt for philosophers.

⁶¹⁹ *Sen. Ep.* 19.9-12; 114.4. See Taoka 2011, 125-26. For Laureys 1991, 103, Quintilian strives to make "a sincere effort to formulate a fair judgement" of Seneca, which seems less convincing. For Rocheblave 1890, 42-45, criticism prevails over praise. See *Inst.* 3.7.20 on good qualities making bad ones even more reproachable.

Seneca the Elder's judgement on Ovid.⁶²⁰ Quintilian ends his section on Seneca by recommending that only advanced pupils should read him, to train their judgment (10.1.131).⁶²¹ This is the kind of apotroptic exemplarity that he recommends to the teachers of younger pupils; advanced pupils can now engage in it themselves by reading Seneca, who serves as a negative example.

In the following section (4.1.2), I will consider one of the two other quotations of Seneca in the *Institutio*, which sets him in relation with his most (in-)famous pupil, Nero, and confirms the impression that Quintilian is depicting him as a negative didactic figure.

4.2.2 On Seneca and His Star-Pupil Nero

Quintilian quotes from Seneca's writings only twice in the *Institutio*. He cites a line of his *Medea* (9.2.9),⁶²² as well as an epigram taken from the address to the Senate that Seneca composed, on Nero's behalf, after Agrippina's death:

Facit quasdam sententias sola geminatio, qualis est Senecae in eo scripto quod Nero ad senatum misit occisa matre, cum se periclitatum uideri uellet: 'saluum me esse adhuc nec credo nec gaudeo.' (*Inst.* 8.5.18)

"Some epigrams are based on mere repetition, such as the one of Seneca in that letter which Nero sent to the Senate after having killed his mother, when he wanted to seem to have been in danger: 'I [can] not yet believe I am safe, nor do I rejoice about it.'"

Seneca's epigram illustrates *sententiae* playing on "mere repetition" (*sola geminatio*). This is not the best category, Quintilian states in the following sentence (8.5.18). It seems remarkable that among all of Seneca's epigrams, Quintilian chooses one that is mediocre, and, more importantly, one that is taken from such a dubious context – the address to the Senate which Seneca writes for Nero, who hypocritically feigns distress after having arranged for his mother to be killed. The correlation between Nero and the murder is not concealed, but brought out through the absolute ablative *occisa matre*, as is also the insincerity of feeling: the causal *cum*-clause shows that through the address, Nero merely wants to preserve appearances, as is emphasised by the alliteration of *uideri* and *uellet* (8.5.18).⁶²³

⁶²⁰ Compare on Ovid *Inst.* 10.1.88: *Ovidius et nimium amator ingenii sui, laudandus tamen partibus*. Seneca the Elder also ascribes excessive ingenuity to Ovid, recounting in *Controv.* 2.2.12 an anecdote showing, rather than his lack of judgement, his unwillingness to comply with it and eliminate bad elements from his works.

⁶²¹ See Amici 2000, 426 on this advice to read Seneca only later on.

⁶²² Sen. *Med.* 452; see Cavarzere and Cristante 2019, 280-81. At *Inst.* 12.10.11, he lists Seneca among the orators whom he heard in his youth. At 8.3.31, he recalls an old controversy between Seneca and Pomponius Mela; at 9.2.98, he reports a quip by Seneca, but it is not clear whether he is speaking about the father or the son.

⁶²³ Compare Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.116-19, where Lucan's spirit sees Nero in the underworld, grown pale at the sight of his mother's torch; Mart. 7.21.1-4, also addressed to Polla for Lucan's birthday, blames Nero for the poet's death; Mart. 4.63.3-4 refers to Nero's failed attempt to drown Agrippina near Baiae, described at Tac. *Ann.* 14.4-5. See

Nero's assassination of Agrippina is already referred to a few paragraphs earlier, which ensures that its second mention here does not go unnoticed. After denouncing contemporary excess in the use of *sententiae* (8.5.13-14), Quintilian reports a few *sententiae*, starting with those playing with surprise (*ex inopinato*). The first one he mentions is a quip of Vibius Crispus at the expense of a man walking around the forum in full armour (8.5.15). The second one is by Africanus:

... insigniter Africanus apud Neronem de morte matris: 'rogant te, Caesar, Galliae tuae ut felicitatem tuam fortiter feras'. (Inst. 8.5.15)

“... in a distinguished way Africanus [said] to Nero about the death of his mother: ‘your Gaul asks you, Caesar, that you should bear your good fortune bravely.’”

The epigram is directed to Nero and concerns Agrippina's death.⁶²⁴ Quintilian praises it as outstanding. The effect of incongruity arises from the contrasting ideas of good luck and having to take it bravely, emphasised by the triple alliteration (*felicitatem ... fortiter feras*).⁶²⁵ The outrageousness of Nero's matricide is enhanced by the examples following it, which all concern cases of familial piety. First comes an epigram taken from Domitius Afer's defence of Cloatilla. She was accused by relatives, and acquitted by Claudius, for burying her husband, who had been part of a group of conspirators (8.5.16). The subsequent epigram is taken from Crispus' defence of Spatale, whose lover died at the age of eighteen after having made her his heiress (8.5.17).⁶²⁶ As Donald Russell comments, the charge and Crispus' quip, '*hominem diuinum, qui sibi indulxit*' (“‘what a divine man, who indulged himself like this’”), seem to indicate that Spatale was being accused for having murdered her lover, but that she lacked a motive because he had spent all his money before dying.⁶²⁷ An epigram of the opposing party, by Trachalus, follows (8.5.19). Both Cloatilla and Spatale are implied to be innocent, Cloatilla even praiseworthy.

This is the context preceding Seneca's epigram, which also concerns a family death. However, there are three key differences between the address to the senate from which it is drawn and the forensic cases from which these preceding epigrams are taken. Firstly, Nero, unlike the two women, is guilty.

on Nero as the paradigmatic bad emperor in Flavian writers, starting from Pliny the Elder (*HN* 7.45-46; 22.92; 30.16ff.), Degl'Innocenti Pierini 2007, 148-52. See also Beagon 1992, 17 on Pliny's denigration of Nero, and on how the connected rejection of *luxuria* fits Flavian imperial ideology. This forms a prelude to Nero's later representation as the Antichrist by Christian writers, e.g. in Comm. *Instr.* 1.41.7; *Carm. apol.* 809-30; Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.28.1. Lact. *Mort. pers.* 2.7-9 mentions this idea but rejects it. See Malik 2020, 79 on the depiction of Nero as the Antichrist in the context of Early Christian millennialist beliefs. Juv. 8.211-14 contrasts Nero and Seneca on the grounds that Seneca did not deserve ritual punishment for a matricide; see Trillitzsch 1971, 60-61 on Juvenal's views on Seneca.

⁶²⁴ Russell 2001, vol. 3, 415 notes that this is Julius Africanus (mentioned also at *Inst.* 10.1.118; 12.10.11), a rival of Domitius Afer.

⁶²⁵ Compare Tac. *Ann.* 14.10.2: *Amici dehinc adire templa et coepto exemplo proxima Campaniae municipia victimis et legationibus laetitiam testari: ipse diversa simulatione maestus et quasi incolumitati suae infensus ac morti parentis inlacrimans.*

⁶²⁶ An epigram of the opposing party, namely of Trachalus' accusation of Spatale, is given at *Inst.* 8.5.19.

⁶²⁷ Russell 2001, vol. 3, 417.

Secondly, he is – outrageously – not under trial. Thirdly, Nero is a man. Unlike the two women, who cannot speak for themselves in court, he should be able to write the letter, but fails to do so: Seneca writes it for him! Acting as the young emperor’s ghost-writer, Seneca becomes complicit with Nero’s crime, and simultaneously makes plain his didactic failure: he did not manage to make an orator and a real man, not to say an emperor, out of Nero.⁶²⁸

According to Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.1-2, Seneca also wrote Nero’s statement for the occasion of Claudius’ death, which struck some members of the audience as odd given the fact that his predecessors used to write their speeches themselves. Suetonius attributes Nero’s incomplete education to two reasons:

Sed a philosophia eum mater auertit monens imperaturo contrariam esse; a cognitione ueterum oratorum Seneca praeceptor, quo diutius in admiratione sui detineret. (Suet. *Ner.* 52)

“But his mother dissuaded him from philosophy, telling him that it jarred with his future rulership; Seneca from studying the old orators, in order to keep him in awe of himself for longer.”

Suetonius plainly makes Seneca, next to Agrippina, responsible for Nero’s incomplete education; and, even worse, he blames it on Seneca’s vanity.⁶²⁹ This may also be a thought underlying Quintilian’s brief passage. For it corresponds to what bad teachers do: while a good teacher (like himself) wants to make the pupil independent, a bad teacher strives to keep him a pupil forever (see §§1.2.1; 3.1.3). It also matches what Quintilian says about Seneca’s critical practice, namely that he criticised better authors to influence the public’s perception of his own style (§4.2.1). Seneca is made responsible for Nero’s lack of proper training, and his subsequent failure to become a real adult. Regarding the murder, Tacitus highlights that the plot was Nero’s own idea, but that Seneca, after accepting its necessity, contributes to the plan (*Ann.* 14.7.2-3).⁶³⁰ Seneca, as a teacher, failed spectacularly, both regarding Nero’s eloquence and his morality.

Mentioning this event, Quintilian presents Seneca as a poor didactic figure, and as complicit with Nero’s most appalling crime.⁶³¹ For the linear reader, a shadow is cast, *a priori*, on his authoritativeness as a *uitiorum insectator* (*Inst.* 10.1.129). It is also remarkable that Quintilian does not

⁶²⁸ Cf. Suet. *Ner.* 7 on Seneca becoming Nero’s teacher after Claudius adopted him. For Schmal 2008, 113, Tacitus points out Seneca’s vanity in devoting his talent less to educating his pupil than to appearing brilliant himself. The teacher-pupil relationship between Seneca and Nero is prominent in Tacitus.

⁶²⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 14.11.3 reports rumours that Seneca wrote Nero’s letter to the senate on this occasion. Sihler 1920, 222 remarks that this betrays a deep antipathy towards Seneca.

⁶³⁰ As Schmal 2008, 113 points out.

⁶³¹ See Trillitzsch 1971, 70 on Fronto rejecting Seneca more strongly than Quintilian, and Holford-Strevens 2003, 277 on Fronto’s analogous stance that Seneca’s thought is serious, but his style disgusting.

give any airtime to Seneca's defiant suicide, as described in most detail by Tacitus.⁶³² Considering Seneca's prominence as a political and intellectual figure, with whose *Letters* Quintilian appears to engage repeatedly in the *Institutio*, this seems likely to be a conscious choice.⁶³³ He leaves no room for a perception of the philosopher as a man who became, in the end, a heroic opponent to Nero, cleansing himself of his previous complicity. Instead, Quintilian roots his widespread popularity firmly in the time of the last Julio-Claudian's reign and highlights his official role as Nero's educator and counsellor.

One could say that Quintilian depicts Seneca as the Neronian didactic antihero, against whom he sets himself and his Flavian project. A political reading of Seneca's depiction may be justified by Quintilian's advertisement of his own role as the educator of Domitian's grandnephews.⁶³⁴ I have argued that he draws Seneca as craving popularity and as a questionable didactic figure, literary critic, and stylist, linking him to the modernist current of literary corruption which he thus anachronistically dismisses as belonging to the past. I have further suggested that he shows Seneca as having failed in his mission to educate his imperial pupil, and as complicit with one of Nero's worst crimes. Very differently, Quintilian presents himself as a teacher of modesty and integrity, who gives better hopes for the education of Domitian's heirs. Following Seneca's own argument in the *De clementia* that a ruler's qualities are mirrored by his subjects (*Clem.* 2.2.1), one could read the opposition between Seneca and Quintilian in the *Institutio* as symbolising the divide between Julio-Claudian past and Flavian present and future: if teachers shape pupils, and rulers influence citizens, the educational responsibilities of the two imperial educators Seneca and Quintilian are far-reaching. Seneca, a bad teacher, formed a matricidal son who set the tone for an epoch of immoral, undisciplined lasciviousness. Quintilian, by contrast, emerges as a man living up to the morality promoted by the *censor* Domitian, and as a good teacher who can take a positive influence on the Flavian emperor's heirs, and through them on society at large.

⁶³² Tac. *Ann.* 15.60-64. See Ker 2009, 18 on the extant accounts of this death (of Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio) drawing on lost Flavian-era accounts by Pliny the Elder, Cluvius Rufus and Fabius Rusticus; see Ash 2018, 21; 282 on Tacitus' account. Tacitus' remark that his public is acquainted with the words Seneca dictated just before his death (*Ann.* 15.63.3: ... *quae in vulgus edita eius verbis invertere supersedeo*) implies that the whole affair was well-known; it seems unlikely that Quintilian, writing one generation earlier, did not know about it. Quintilian also fails to mention the other key moment in which Seneca entered into conflict with imperial power, his exile to Corsica, which Martial e.g. mentions it at 7.44-45: see Mindt 2014, 86. See Trillitzsch 1971, 58 on Martial's friendliness towards Seneca. Schmal 2008, 117-21 argues for an ironical reading of Seneca's death scene in Tacitus. See also Suet. *Ner.* 35: *Senecam praeceptorem ad necem compulit* ...

⁶³³ Pliny mentions Seneca at *HN* 14.51, pointing to the connected attributes of power and learnedness. However, he then undermines his compliment by describing how Seneca excessively coveted property. See Trillitzsch 1971, 50-51 on this passage, and on how Pliny's ambivalence may be motivated by Seneca's involvement with Nero.

⁶³⁴ Van den Berg 2014, 265 argues that Quintilian implicitly aligns himself with Apollodorus and Theodorus, the teachers of Octavian and Tiberius (*Inst.* 3.1.17-18).

Conclusion

In the first half of this chapter, I pointed out how Quintilian, in connection with his advice on *imitatio*, consistently pairs the two opposed corrupt currents of archaism and modernism. Early on, both should be avoided, whereas older students may benefit from being occasionally confronted with corrupt oratory, since this will reinforce their feeling for what is good oratory. (§4.1.1). Archaism is presented as a marginal (§4.1.2), modernism as the predominant current. I have pointed to various possible Senecan echoes in the characterization of the latter, and argued that it is posited as the more substantial didactic threat because of its popularity (it appeals to the ignorant, who include children) and because it purportedly promotes the idea that oratory can do without training, which is fundamentally opposed to Quintilian's educational programme (§4.1.3).

Apotreptic exemplarity is recommended as a didactic strategy, and Quintilian, once again, may be said to implement a technique he recommends (in this case, to teachers) through his portrayal of corrupt oratory. This does not mean that he simply rejects modern stylistic developments: as seen in §2.2.3, the idea of literary progress, based largely on *imitatio*, lies at the core of his training programme, and plays an important role in conveying credibility to his claim that he will educate the ideal orator.

In the second half of the chapter, I turned to Quintilian's portrayal of Seneca (§4.2.1-2), arguing that Quintilian is portraying him as a poor critic, stylist, and educational figure, and undermining him as a moral authority both through the description of his style and by associating him with Nero. At the same time as he criticises him, Quintilian appears also to be heavily indebted to Seneca for his literary critical positions. Furthermore, I have suggested that Quintilian creates a contrast between Flavian present and Neronian past. He sets his reforming didactic project, envisaging the creation of the ideal orator and statesman characterized by the kind of modesty and restraint promoted by the Flavian house, against the background of a widespread literary corruption still influenced by the past.⁶³⁵ Quintilian casts Seneca as the (stylistically as well as morally) decadent champion of the former, himself as the promoter of the latter. Considering the similarity of the passages, it is intriguing that Gellius does not mention Quintilian.⁶³⁶ If Gellius knew the *Institutio* and avoided mentioning it, a possible (if speculative) explanation could be that Quintilian, having been closely associated with Domitian, under the Antonine dynasty had become just as unpopular as Seneca, Nero's tutor, under the Flavians.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ See for a similar condemnation of decadent Neronian tastes e.g. Plin. *HN* 2.92-93; 7.45-46; 7.129; 13.22-23. Gowing 2005, 105 writes that the Flavian period tries to distance itself from Neronian decadence, as particularly evident from the fact that Silius Italicus in his poem leaves out the troubled period of recent history, and the neutral references to the Republic in Statius' *Silvae*. See Petersen 2018, 274 on Tacitus presenting Neronian times as decadent.

⁶³⁶ Quintilian is never cited directly in the *NA*; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 157-71 for an overview of the scholarly sources Gellius cites. For Hout 1999, 360, Gellius is referring to Quintilian.

⁶³⁷ See on Quintilian's proximity to the Flavian house Coleman 1986, 3110; Lana 1990, 288; Scarano Ussani 2003, 290-91; Whitton 2019, 28. See on the later negative reception of Seneca Ash 2018, 21; Edwards 2019, 29. As Adamietz 1986, 2266 states, it makes sense that Quintilian would be out of fashion in the archaist current predominant shortly after. See also Bowersock 1998, 205 on the repudiation of Domitianic literary tastes after

Conclusion

Martial's address to Quintilian served as a starting point for this thesis: *Quintiliane, vagae moderator summe iuventae* (Mart. 2.90.1). Its aim has been to examine how Quintilian lives up to this reputation – or rather how, within the *Institutio*, he fashions an authorial persona, and constructs a narrative framework, which would persuade readers of the validity of the teachings he conveys and confirm his status as an exemplary teacher down the centuries. Rather than treating the text selectively by pulling out circumscribed passages for the analysis of single topics, as scholars have often done in a fruitful if restrictive way, I have embraced a holistic reading of the *Institutio*. I have not focused on single books or chapters. Instead, I have incorporated material taken from throughout the whole work to demonstrate how Quintilian builds a consistent didactic framework and how the authorial persona he creates leads the reader through all the stages of the didactic process. I have aimed to show that linear reading is what the *Institutio* is conceived for, and that going through it from the first page to the last does it more justice, and makes for a more rewarding reading experience, than a selective approach.

In chapter one I examined the programmatic beginning and wider structure of the *Institutio*, in chapter two the reception of Cicero, in chapter three the conceptualisation of the ideal orator whom Quintilian sets out to educate, and in chapter four the depiction of contemporary oratory and the reception of Seneca the Younger. The four chapters together are meant to give a sense of the construction of the work and its positioning within a specific literary-cultural context. They form the starting point for my discussion of Quintilian's didactic strategies, which cannot be fully understood without considering the overall construction, goal, and models of the *Institutio*. I chose four focal points for my analysis of the didactic framework of the work: firstly, I examined how the criteria that Katharina Volk establishes for didactic poetry can be applied to the *Institutio*: “explicit didactic intent”, “teacher-student constellation”, “poetic self-consciousness” and “poetic simultaneity”.⁶³⁸ Secondly, I analysed Quintilian's construction of an authoritative didactic persona. Thirdly, I considered how he contrasts himself and his ideal orator with other authorities, particularly to anonymous contemporary didactic figures and orators and two key models, Cicero and Seneca the Younger. Finally, I looked at how Quintilian employs ‘proleptic’ strategies allowing him to maintain his didactic authority regardless of whether anyone will ever really implement his teachings and become the ideal orator. These focal points served as leitmotifs which determined my discussion of the *Institutio* in all four chapters.

It is my contention that all four criteria that Katharina Volk identifies for didactic poetry can be identified in the *Institutio*. In the *Preface*, Quintilian first announces his “explicit didactic intent” to educate the ideal orator and creates a “teacher-student constellation” by dedicating his work to Marcellus Vitorius for the sake of his son Geta (§1.1.2). If the criteria of “poetic self-consciousness”

96CE. Following McGill 2020, 23, this would be plagiarism if Gellius was deliberately concealing his debt to Quintilian due to the changed political circumstances.

⁶³⁸ Volk 2002, 37-39.

and “poetic simultaneity” do not fully apply to the *Institutio*, then that is only because it is a prose work. Quintilian both claims a highly self-aware use of (prose) language for himself which facilitates the pupil’s learning process (§1.1.2) and creates the impression that the work is progressing simultaneously with the child’s growth (§1.2.1), which he enhances by drawing parallels between his writing process and his own life ‘outside’ the work (§1.2.2). Volk’s criteria are particularly fitting also insofar as Quintilian’s two main claims to novelty concern his goal of educating the ideal orator (§§1.2.1; 3.1.1-2; 3.2.1-2), and his didactic method, which encompasses both the self-aware use of language and the thought-through construction of an educational programme gradually increasing in difficulty (§§1.2.1; 2.1.1-2; 3.1.1).

Throughout the work, Quintilian constructs an authoritative teacher-persona, thus signalling that the *Institutio* is not just a random assemblage of facts, but an interconnected and ambitious educational programme coming from a trustworthy source. From the very beginning, he presents himself as a man who is learned but not in a bookish way, who, having gathered real-life forensic experience, can present a comprehensive account of the information the future orator will need without falling into unnecessary detail, and who is hard-working and modest, striving for the pupil’s success, not for his own renown (§1.1.1-2; 2.1.1-2; 3.2.1). At various points, he supports this self-representation by opening a window onto what he presents as his ‘real’ life, showing himself as a good man and as a successful advocate and teacher, who was even entrusted with the education of Domitian’s heirs (§1.2.2). Furthermore, he shows himself to possess, in his writing and in his life as he depicts it, the qualities that he requires for the orator, thus making plausible that he should be in the position to educate him (§3.2.1-2).

Even if modesty is a key element of his didactic persona, Quintilian throughout the work sharpens the contours of his own persona and of his didactic endeavour by (often quite assertively) setting himself, his method, and his ideal orator against other didactic figures and authors – a tried and tested technique across different genres for enhancing a writer’s standing. He criticises anonymous writers and teachers of rhetoric (§1.1.2) and similarly presents grammarians and philosophers as poor didactic figures. To all of them, he attributes traits which contrast with those that he claims for himself: they lack real-life experience and focus on uselessly detailed knowledge, are lazy and arrogant, and are concerned with their own benefit rather than with the pupil’s (§3.1.2). Contemporary philosophers also figure as a negative foil against whom the ideal orator is set: their purported arrogance, laziness, and engagement in obscure debates is diametrically opposed to the ideal orator’s modesty, hard work, and engagement in society (§§3.1.2-3; 3.2.1-3). Two currents of corrupt contemporary oratory, archaism and modernism, further stand in contrast to the appropriate kind of rhetorical style envisaged for the orator (§§4.1.1-3).

Regarding his reception of his most important model, Cicero, I have aimed to show how Quintilian deftly balances praise and criticism. He acknowledges Cicero as a key source of rhetorical theory but asserts his own authority by advertising his own approach as more methodical and ultimately

more useful insofar as it is praxis-oriented, encompassing all the knowledge students need (§§2.1.1-2). He praises Cicero's oratory but maintains that he did not reach perfection, thus making room for his own didactic project to form the ideal orator (§§2.2.1-3). As for Cicero's conception of the ideal orator, Quintilian similarly refers to it but claims novelty for his own project. Indeed, he differs from Cicero through the adoption of Stoic notions and his claim that oratory should be 're'-integrated into rhetoric, which he supports by depicting contemporary philosophers negatively (§§3.1.1-3).

I have argued that a similar, if even more ambiguous, balancing act can be found in Quintilian's reception of Seneca the Younger. On the one hand, he adopts key notions from Seneca: the idea that style betrays character and the dichotomy between rhetoric and philosophy, words and actions, which he overturns polemically (§§3.1.2; 3.2.1). He also adopts Senecan vocabulary to describe modernist oratory (§§3.2.2; 4.1.3). On the other hand, he presents Seneca as a questionable stylist, literary critic, and teacher, who 'seduced' youths and failed to make a good man and an orator out of Nero. I have suggested that Seneca is pitched as a didactic antihero against whom Quintilian, the educator of Domitian's heirs, can set himself. I have also introduced the notion of 'polemical anachronism', which can explain the tension between Quintilian's assurances that his times are the best moment to educate the ideal orator (§2.2.3) and his criticism of contemporary oratory: tying modernism to Seneca, he can present his project as 'truly' Flavian and show that modernism is outdated and pertains to Seneca's Neronian past (§§4.2.1-2).

Finally, I have proposed that another key feature of the didactic framework of the *Institutio* are what I called 'proleptic' strategies. Instead of passing in silence over elements that may pose a problem to his didactic endeavour either because they cannot be influenced by any teacher or because they are beyond the scope of his written didactic work, Quintilian boldly thematises them. Thus, he emphasises the importance of natural talent (§§1.1.2; 2.2.2) and of favourable social and historical circumstances (§§1.2.1; 2.2.3). He also comments on the impossibility of conveying, in a written work, all the knowledge a pupil will need and underlines the importance of the pupil's own training and independent hard work, and particularly of his imitation practice (§§1.2.1; 2.2.1-2; 3.2.1). These remarks can be read, rather than as an admission of failure, instead as part of a proleptic strategy contributing to the plausibility of his didactic endeavour, and thus to its persuasiveness. If the didactic process is a collaborative venture, which is co-determined by factors that Quintilian cannot influence, then even if nobody in the real world reaches the ideal goal, this will not mean that he failed as a teacher. All he can do, in a written work, is to carefully select the most important knowledge, to lead readers through a carefully crafted didactic educational programme, and to make them aware of its limits. Instead of expecting to be passively imbued with knowledge, potential students (led by their real-life educators at first, and later independently) must operate with the protreptic and apotreptic examples which he presents them with and develop the intellectual flexibility that his training programme will foster, if implemented correctly. In the process, Quintilian himself (through his didactic persona) emerges as an exemplary teacher whose voice will lead them along the way.

Overall, in my thesis I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the *Institutio* deserves more attention, and also more enthusiasm, than it has often received. It is not just a repository of information, but a complex literary work in its own right – one which is full of meaningful and illuminating interconnections which repay a dedicated reader's careful engagement. It is, at core, a persuasive work. Quintilian, an advocate turned teacher and finally writer, pulls out all the stops of his art to keep readers interested in his work and to convince them of the validity of his teachings. He proleptically assuages their potential doubts about the feasibility of his goal to educate the ideal orator and keeps them engaged by inserting markers which signal the gradual progress of the didactic journey and by varying his style: dry technical sections are interspersed with more juicy passages containing, for instance, funny anecdotes, flamboyant imagery, or poetic quotations. Throughout the work, Quintilian constructs a likeable and authoritative didactic persona for himself, which greatly contributes to his persuasiveness. One of his persona's key features is modesty, which has often been mistaken for the author's 'true' character. I have argued that we should treat this modesty as a construct, and that there actually is a steely confidence at the core of Quintilian's self-presentation. This confidence appears particularly from the way in which he asserts himself, his didactic project, and the ideal orator he envisages not only against anonymous didactic competitors and orators, but also against his great model Cicero and against (I contend) the most prominent intellectual of Neronian times, Seneca the Younger. The *Institutio* is a confident and ambitious work which places 'legacy' centre-stage. Quintilian aims to situate himself as the premier expert in oratory of the Flavian age and beyond, and to reassert the value of oratory, as opposed to warfare, as the central value of the Flavian era after the brutal civil wars of 69 CE. The didactic persona which he creates for himself lies right at the heart of this ambitious project. I hope to have shown how Quintilian in the *Institutio* presents himself as the ideal teacher – for the ideal orator – he was long perceived to be, and to have unlocked a new, 'linear' way to reengage with this important cultural artefact.

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Abbreviations

- OLD Glare, Peter G., ed. 1968-82. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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