

## From On Sublimity<sup>1</sup>

### Preface

My dear Postumius Terentianus,<sup>2</sup>

[1.1] You will recall that when we were reading together Caecilius<sup>3</sup> monograph *On Sublimity*, we felt that it was inadequate to its high subject, and failed to touch the essential points. Nor indeed did it appear to offer the reader much practical help, though this ought to be a writer's principal object. Two things are required of any textbook: first, that it should explain what its subject is; second, and more important, that it should explain how and by what methods we can achieve it. Caecilius tries at immense length to explain to us what sort of thing 'the sublime' is, as though we did not know; but he has somehow passed over as unnecessary the question how we can develop our nature to some degree of greatness. [1.2] However, we ought perhaps not so much to blame our author for what he has left out as to commend him for his originality and enthusiasm.

You have urged me to set down a few notes on sublimity for your own use. Let us then consider whether there is anything in my observations which may be thought useful to public men. You must help me, my friend, by giving your honest opinion in detail, as both your natural candour and your friendship with me require. It was well said that what man has in common with the gods is 'doing good and telling the truth'.

[1.3] Your education dispenses me from any long preliminary definition. Sublimity is a kind of eminence or excellence of discourse. It is the source of the distinction of the very greatest poets and prose writers and the means by which they have given eternal life to their own fame. [1.4] For grandeur produces ecstasy rather than persuasion in the hearer; and the combination of wonder and astonishment always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant. This is because persuasion is on the whole something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every hearer. Experience in invention and ability to order and arrange material cannot be detected in single passages; we begin to appreciate them only when we see the whole context. Sublimity, on the other hand, produced at the right moment, tears everything up like a whirlwind, and exhibits the orator's whole power at a single blow.

[2.1] Your own experience will lead you to these and similar considerations. The question from which I must begin is whether there is in fact an art of sublimity or profundity. Some people think it is a complete mistake to reduce things like this to technical rules. Greatness, the argument runs, is a natural product, and does not come by teaching. The only art is to be born like that. They believe moreover that natural products are very much weakened by being reduced to the bare bones of a textbook.

[2.2] In my view, these arguments can be refuted by considering three points:

1. Translated by D. A. Russell, who has also supplied the headings in the text. The chapter and section numbers, included in square brackets, date to the 16th century.  
2. Nothing is known of Postumius Terentianus.  
3. Caecilius of Calacte in Sicily (1st c. B.C.E.), Greek rhetorician. His monograph on sublimity is

lost, but later references in Longinus's text suggest that the author neglected the role of strong noble emotion and generous use of metaphor, valuing the even tone of impeccably correct and faultless writers over the ecstasy, wonder, and astonishment of erratic geniuses.

(i) Though nature is on the whole a law unto herself in matters of emotion and elevation, she is not a random force and does not work altogether without method.

(ii) She is herself in every instance a first and primary element of creation, but it is method that is competent to provide and contribute quantities and appropriate occasions for everything, as well as perfect correctness in training and application.

(iii) Grandeur is particularly dangerous when left on its own, unaccompanied by knowledge, unsteadied, unballasted, abandoned to mere impulse and ignorant temerity. It often needs the curb as well as the spur.

[2.3] What Demosthenes<sup>4</sup> said of life in general is true also of literature: good fortune is the greatest of blessings, but good counsel comes next, and the lack of it destroys the other also. In literature, nature occupies the place of good fortune, and art that of good counsel. Most important of all, the very fact that some things in literature depend on nature alone can itself be learned only from art.

If the critic of students of this subject will bear these points in mind, he will, I believe, come to realize that the examination of the question before us is by no means useless or superfluous.

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### Some Marks of True Sublimity

At this stage, the question we must put to ourselves for discussion is how to avoid the faults which are so much tied up with sublimity. [6.1] The answer, my friend, is: by first of all achieving a genuine understanding and appreciation of true sublimity. This is difficult; literary judgement comes only as the final product of long experience. However, for the purposes of instruction, I think we can say that an understanding of all this can be acquired. I approach the problem in this way:

[7.1] In ordinary life, nothing is truly great which it is great to despise; wealth, honour, reputation, absolute power—anything in short which has a lot of external trappings—can never seem supremely good to the wise man because it is no small good to despise them. People who could have these advantages if they chose but disdain them out of magnanimity are admired much more than those who actually possess them. It is much the same with elevation in poetry and literature generally. We have to ask ourselves whether any particular example does not give a show of grandeur which, for all its accidental trappings, will, when dissected, prove vain and hollow, the kind of thing which it does a man more honour to despise than to admire. [7.2] It is our nature to be elevated and exalted by true sublimity. Filled with joy and pride, we come to believe we have created what we have only heard. [7.3] When a man of sense and literary experience hears something many times over, and it fails to dispose his mind to greatness or to leave him with more to reflect upon than was contained in the mere words, but comes instead to seem valueless on repeated inspection, this is not true sublimity; it endures only for the moment of hearing. Real sublimity contains much food for reflection, is difficult or rather impossible to resist, and makes a strong and ineffaceable impression on the memory. [7.4] In a word, reckon

4. *Oration* 23.113 [translator's note]. Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.E.), the greatest Athenian orator.

those things which please everybody all the time as genuinely and finely sublime. When people of different trainings, ways of life, tastes, ages, and manners all agree about something, the judgement and assent of so many distinct voices lends strength and irrefutability to the conviction that their admiration is rightly directed.

#### *The Five Sources of Sublimity; The Plan of the Book*

[8.1] There are, one may say, five most productive sources of sublimity. (Competence in speaking is assumed as a common foundation for all five; nothing is possible without it.)

- (i) The first and most important is the power to conceive great thoughts; I defined this in my work on Xenophon.<sup>5</sup>
- (ii) The second is strong and inspired emotion. (These two sources are for the most part natural; the remaining three involve art.)
- (iii) Certain kinds of figures. (These may be divided into figures of thought and figures of speech.)
- (iv) Noble diction. This has as subdivisions choice of words and the use of metaphorical and artificial language.<sup>6</sup>
- (v) Finally, to round off the whole list, dignified and elevated word-arrangement.

Let us now examine the points which come under each of these heads.

I must first observe, however, that Caecilius has omitted some of the five—emotion, for example. [8.2] Now if he thought that sublimity and emotion were one and the same thing and always existed and developed together, he was wrong. Some emotions, such as pity, grief, and fear, are found divorced from sublimity and with a low effect. Conversely, sublimity often occurs apart from emotion. Of the innumerable examples of this I select Homer's bold account of the Aloadae:<sup>7</sup>

Ossa upon Olympus they sought to heap; and on Ossa  
Pelion with its shaking forest, to make a path to heaven—

and the even more impressive sequel—

and they would have finished their work . . . .<sup>8</sup>

[8.3] In orators, *encomia*<sup>9</sup> and ceremonial or exhibition pieces always involve grandeur and sublimity, though they are generally devoid of emotion. Hence those orators who are best at conveying emotion are least good at *encomia*, and conversely the experts at *encomia* are not conveyers of emotion. [8.4] On the other hand, if Caecilius thought that emotion had no contribution to make to sublimity and therefore thought it not worth mentioning, he was again completely wrong. I should myself have no hesitation in saying that there is nothing so productive of grandeur as noble emotion in the right place. It inspires and possesses our words with a kind of madness and divine spirit.

5. Athenian historian and essayist (ca. 428–ca. 354 B.C.E.).

6. Or "and coined words" [translator's note].

7. In Greek mythology, the two sons of Poseidon (god of the sea) and Iphimedeia, wife of Alocus.

8. *Odyssey* 11.315–17 [translator's note]. Ossa, Pelion, and Pelion are all mountains in north-eastern Greece.

9. Formal poems (odes) or speeches in praise of a living person, object, or event, but not a god, delivered before a special audience. See, for example, GORGAS'S *Encomium of Helen* (above).

#### (i) *Greatness of Thought*

[9.1] The first source, natural greatness, is the most important. Even if it is a matter of endowment rather than acquisition, we must, so far as is possible, develop our minds in the direction of greatness and make them always pregnant with noble thoughts. You ask how this can be done. [9.2] I wrote elsewhere something like this: 'Sublimity is the echo of a noble mind.' This is why a mere idea, without verbal expression, is sometimes admired for its nobility—just as Ajax's silence in the Vision of the Dead is grand and indeed more sublime than any words could have been.<sup>1</sup> [9.3] First then we must state where sublimity comes from: the orator must not have low or ignoble thoughts. Those whose thoughts and habits are trivial and servile all their lives cannot possibly produce anything admirable or worthy of eternity. Words will be great if thoughts are weighty.

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#### *Selection and Organization of Material*

[10.1] Now have we any other means of making our writing sublime? Every topic naturally includes certain elements which are inherent in its raw material. It follows that sublimity will be achieved if we consistently select the most important of these inherent features and learn to organize them as a unity by combining one with another. The first of these procedures attracts the reader by the selection of details, the second by the density of those selected.

Consider Sappho's<sup>2</sup> treatment of the feelings involved in the madness of being in love. She uses the attendant circumstances and draws on real life at every point. And in what does she show her quality? In her skill in selecting the outstanding details and making a unity of them:

[10.2] To me he seems a peer of the gods, the man who sits facing you and hears your sweet voice  
and lovely laughter; it flutters my heart in my breast. When I see you only for a moment, I cannot speak;  
my tongue is broken, a subtle fire runs under my skin; my eyes cannot see, my ears hum;  
cold sweat pours off me; shivering grips me all over; I am paler than grass; I seem near to dying;  
but all must be endured . . . .<sup>3</sup>

[10.3] Do you not admire the way in which she brings everything together—mind and body, hearing and tongue, eyes and skin? She seems to have lost them all, and to be looking for them as though they were external to her. She is cold and hot, mad and sane, frightened and near death, all by turns. The result is that we see in her not a single emotion, but a complex of emotions. Lovers experience all this; Sappho's excellence, as I have said, lies in her adoption and combination of the most striking details.

A similar point can be made about the descriptions of storms in Homer,

1. *Odyssey* 11.563. Note that this is not an example, but a simile illustrating the point that ideas in themselves can be grand [translator's note].

2. Greek lyric poet (b. ca. 612 B.C.E.).

3. Sappho, frag. 31 Lobel-Page.

who always picks out the most terrifying aspects. [10.4] The author of the *Arimaspea* on the other hand expects these lines to excite terror:

This too is a great wonder to us in our hearts:  
there are men living on water, far from land, on the deep sea:  
miserable they are, for hard is their lot;  
they give their eyes to the stars, their lives to the sea;  
often they raise their hands in prayer to the gods,  
as their bowels heave in pain.<sup>4</sup>

Anyone can see that this is more polished than awe-inspiring. Now compare it with Homer [10.5] (I select one example out of many):

He fell upon them as upon a swift ship falls a wave,  
huge, wind-reared by the clouds. The ship  
is curtained in foam, a hideous blast of wind  
roars in the sail. The sailors shudder in terror:  
they are carried away from under death, but only just.<sup>5</sup>

[10.6] Aratus<sup>6</sup> tried to transfer the same thought:

A little plank wards off Hades.

But this is smooth and unimpressive, not frightening. Moreover, by saying 'a plank wards off Hades', he has got rid of the danger. The plank *does* keep death away. Homer, on the other hand, does not banish the cause of fear at a stroke; he gives a vivid picture of men, one might almost say, facing death many times with every wave that comes. Notice also the forced combination of naturally uncompoundable prepositions: *hupok*, 'from under'. Homer has tortured the words to correspond with the emotion of the moment, and expressed the emotion magnificently by thus crushing words together. He has in effect stamped the special character of the danger on the diction: 'they are carried away from under death'.

[10.7] Compare Archilochus on the shipwreck, and Demosthenes on the arrival of the news ('It was evening . . .').<sup>7</sup>

In short, one might say that these writers have taken only the very best pieces, polished them up and fitted them together. They have inserted nothing inflated, undignified, or pedantic. Such things ruin the whole effect, because they produce, as it were, gaps or crevices, and so spoil the impressive thoughts which have been built into a structure whose cohesion depends upon their mutual relations.

4. From a lost poem attributed to Aristaeus of Proconessus, a prophet of Apollo said to have traveled in Siberia in the 7th c. B.C.E. The lines perhaps express the surprised comment of innocent continental, deep in Asia, on the tales they have heard about ships and seagoing (translator's note).  
5. *Odyssey* 15.624-28 (translator's note).  
6. *Phaenomena* 299 (translator's note). Aratus (ca. 315-ca. 240 B.C.E.). Greek poet who often wrote on philosophy and natural science.  
7. The example from Archilochus cannot be certainly identified. That from Demosthenes (*On the Crown* 169) describes the alarm at Athens when

news arrived of Philip's occupation of Elatea (339 B.C.E.): 'It was evening when somebody brought the *prutaneis* [city magistrates] the news that Elatea was captured. Some of them got up in the middle of dinner and began to drive the traders from the stalls in the *agora* and burn the wicker hurdles. Other sent for the generals and gave instructions to the trumpeter. The town was full of uproar' (translator's note). Archilochus (7th c. B.C.E.), earliest Greek lyric poet whose work survives. Philip II (359-336 B.C.E.), king of Macedon. Elatea: strategically located town, three days' march from Athens.

## Amplification

[11.1] The quality called 'amplification' is connected with those we have been considering. It is found when the facts or the issues at stake allow many starts and pauses in each section. You wheel up one impressive unit after another to give a series of increasing importance. There are innumerable varieties of amplification: [11.2] it may be produced by commonplace, by exaggeration or intensification of facts or arguments, or by a build-up of action or emotion. The orator should realize, however, that none of these will have its full effect without sublimity. Passages expressing pity or disparagement are no doubt an exception; but in any other instance of amplification, if you take away the sublime element, you take the soul away from the body. Without the strengthening influence of the sublimity, the effective element in the whole loses all its vigour and solidity.

[11.3] What is the difference between this precept and the point made above about the inclusion of vital details and their combination in a unity? What in general is the difference between amplification and sublimity? I must define my position briefly on these points, in order to make myself clear.

[12.1] I do not feel satisfied with the definition given by the rhetoricians: 'amplification is expression which adds grandeur to its subject'. This might just as well be a definition of sublimity or emotion or tropes. All these add grandeur of some kind. The difference lies, in my opinion, in the fact that sublimity depends on elevation, whereas amplification involves extension; sublimity exists often in a single thought, amplification cannot exist without a certain quantity and superfluity. [12.2] To give a general definition, amplification is an aggregation of all the details and topics which constitute a situation, strengthening the argument by dwelling on it; it differs from proof in that the latter demonstrates the point made . . .

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## Imitation of Earlier Writers as a Means to Sublimity

[13.2] Plato,<sup>8</sup> if we will read him with attention, illustrates yet another road to sublimity, besides those we have discussed. This is the way of imitation and emulation of great writers of the past. Here too, my friend, is an aim to which we must hold fast. Many are possessed by a spirit not their own. It is like what we are told of the Pythia<sup>9</sup> at Delphi: she is in contact with the tripod near the cleft in the ground which (so they say) exhales a divine vapour, and she is thereupon made pregnant by the supernatural power and forthwith prophesies as one inspired. Similarly, the genius of the ancients acts as a kind of oracular cavern, and effluences flow from it into the minds of their imitators. Even those previously not much inclined to prophesy become inspired and share the enthusiasm which comes from the greatness of others. [13.3] Was Herodotus the only 'most Homeric' writer? Surely Stesichorus<sup>1</sup> and Archilochus earned the name before him. So, more than any,

8. Greek philosopher (427-347 B.C.E.). For Plato's comments on poetry, see above.

9. A priestess of Apollo and the most famous of his oracles (located on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus near the Greek city Delphi).  
1. Greek choral poet (ca. 630-555 B.C.E.) who wrote narratives on epic themes. Herodotus (ca. 484-ca. 425 B.C.E.), Greek historian.

did Plato, who diverted to himself countless rills from the Homeric spring. (If Ammonius<sup>2</sup> had not selected and written up detailed examples of this, I might have had to prove the point myself.) [13.4] In all this process there is no plagiarism. It resembles rather the reproduction of good character in statues and works of art.<sup>3</sup> Plato could not have put such a brilliant finish on his philosophical doctrines or so often risen to poetical subjects and poetical language, if he had not tried, and tried wholeheartedly, to compete for the prize against Homer, like a young aspirant challenging an admired master. To break a lance in this way may well have been a brash and contentious thing to do, but the competition proved anything but valueless. As Hesiod says, 'this strife is good for men.'<sup>4</sup> Truly it is a noble contest and prize of honour, and one well worth winning, in which to be defeated by one's elders is itself no disgrace.

[14.1] We can apply this to ourselves. When we are working on something which needs loftiness of expression and greatness of thought, it is good to imagine how Homer would have said the same thing, or how Plato or Demosthenes or (in history) Thucydides<sup>5</sup> would have invested it with sublimity. These great figures, presented to us as objects of emulation and, as it were, shining before our gaze, will somehow elevate our minds to the greatness of which we form a mental image. [14.2] They will be even more effective if we ask ourselves 'How would Homer or Demosthenes have reacted to what I am saying, if he had been here? What would his feelings have been?' It makes it a great occasion if you imagine such a jury or audience for your own speech, and pretend that you are answering for what you write before judges and witnesses of such heroic stature. [14.3] Even more stimulating is the further thought: 'How will posterity take what I am writing?' If a man is afraid of saying anything which will outlast his own life and age, the conceptions of his mind are bound to be incomplete and abortive; they will miscarry and never be brought to birth whole and perfect for the day of posthumous fame.

#### Visualization (Phantasia)

[15.1] Another thing which is extremely productive of grandeur, magnificence and urgency, my young friend, is visualization (*phantasia*). I use this word for what some people call image-production. The term *phantasia* is used generally for anything which in any way suggests a thought productive of speech;<sup>6</sup> but the word has also come into fashion for the situation in which enthusiasm and emotion make the speaker *see* what he is saying and bring it *visually* before his audience. [15.2] It will not escape you that rhetorical visualization has a different intention from that of the poets: in poetry the aim is astonishment, in oratory it is clarity. Both, however, seek emotion and excitement.

2. Head of the Alexandrian library (2d c. B.C.E.) and author of commentaries on Homer and other Greek authors.
3. Text uncertain: perhaps "the reproduction of beauty of form . . ." [translator's note].
4. *Works and Days* 24: healthy rivalry contrasted

- with the strife that produces war [translator's note]. Hesiod (active ca. 700 B.C.E.), Greek didactic poet.
5. Greek historian (ca. 455–ca. 400 B.C.E.).
6. A Stoic definition [translator's note].

Mother, I beg you, do not drive them at me, the women with the blood in their eyes and the snakes—they are here, they are here, jumping right up to me.<sup>7</sup>

Or again:

O! O! She'll kill me. Where shall I escape?<sup>8</sup>

The poet himself saw the Erinyes,<sup>9</sup> and has as good as made his audience see what he imagined.

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[15.8] The poetical examples, as I said, have a quality of exaggeration which belongs to fable and goes far beyond credibility. In an orator's visualizations, on the other hand, it is the element of fact and truth which makes for success; when the content of the passage is poetical and fabulous and does not shrink from any impossibility, the result is a shocking and outrageous abnormality. This is what happens with the shock orators of our own day: like tragic actors, these fine fellows *see* the Erinyes, and are incapable of understanding that when Orestes says

Let me go; you are one of my Erinyes, you are hugging me tight, to throw me into Hell,<sup>1</sup>

he visualizes all this *because he is mad*.

[15.9] What then is the effect of rhetorical visualization? There is much it can do to bring urgency and passion into our words; but it is when it is closely involved with factual arguments that it enslaves the hearer as well as persuading him. 'Suppose you heard a shout this very moment outside the court, and someone said that the prison had been broken open and the prisoners had escaped—no one, young or old, would be so casual as not to give what help he could. And if someone then came forward and said "This is the man who let them out", our friend would never get a hearing; it would be the end of him.'<sup>2</sup> [15.10] There is a similar instance in Hyperides' defence of himself when he was on trial for the proposal to liberate the slaves which he put forward after the defeat.<sup>3</sup> 'It was not the proposer', he said, 'who drew up this decree: it was the battle of Chaeronea.' Here the orator uses a visualization actually in the moment of making his factual argument, with the result that his thought has taken him beyond the limits of mere persuasiveness. [15.11] Now our natural instinct is, in all such cases, to attend to the stronger influence, so that we are diverted from the demonstration to the astonishment caused by the visualization, which by its very brilliance conceals the factual aspect. This is a natural reaction: when two things are joined together, the stronger attracts to itself the force of the weaker.

[15.12] This will suffice for an account of sublimity of thought produced by greatness of mind, imitation, or visualization.<sup>4</sup>

7. Euripides, *Orestes* 255–57. Orestes sees the Furies [translator's note]. The Furies: hideous spirits, who avenge wrongs done to kindred, especially murder.

8. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 291. Again Orestes and the Furies [translator's note].

9. That is, the Furies.

1. Euripides, *Orestes* 264–65 [translator's note].
2. Demosthenes, *Oration* 24.208 [translator's note].

note].

3. I.e., after Philip's victory at Chaeronea (338 B.C.E.). The speech is not extant [translator's note]. Hyperides (389–322 B.C.E.), Greek orator, professional speech writer, and prosecutor. Chaeronea: northernmost town of Boeotia, where Philip defeated the Athenians and the Thebans.

4. Note that this is not a complete summary of chaps. 9–15 [translator's note].

(iii) *Figures: An Example to Illustrate the Right Use of Figures*<sup>5</sup>

[16.1] The next topic is that of figures. Properly handled, figures constitute, as I said, no small part of sublimity. It would be a vast, or rather infinite, labour to enumerate them all; what I shall do is to expound a few of those which generate sublimity, simply in order to confirm my point.

[16.2] Here is Demosthenes putting forward a demonstrative argument on behalf of his policy.<sup>6</sup> What would have been the natural way to put it? 'You have not done wrong, you who fought for the liberty of Greece; you have examples to prove this close at home: the men of Marathon, of Salamis, of Plataea did not do wrong.' But instead of this he was suddenly inspired to give voice to the oath by the heroes of Greece: 'By those who risked their lives at Marathon, you have not done wrong!' Observe what he effects by this single figure of conjuration, or 'apostrophe' as I call it here. He defies his audience's ancestors, suggesting that it is right to take an oath by men who fell so bravely, as though they were gods. He inspires the judges with the temper of those who risked their lives. He transforms his demonstrations into an extraordinary piece of sublimity and passion, and into the convincingness of this unusual and amazing oath. At the same time he injects into his hearers' minds a healing specific, so as to lighten their hearts by these paeans of praise and make them as proud of the battle with Philip as of the triumphs<sup>7</sup> of Marathon and Salamis. In short, the figure enables him to run away with his audience.

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*The Relation between Figures and Sublimity*

[17.1] At this point, my friend, I feel I ought not to pass over an observation of my own. It shall be very brief: figures are natural allies of sublimity and themselves profit wonderfully from the alliance. I will explain how this happens.

Playing tricks by means of figures is a peculiarly suspect procedure. It raises the suspicion of a trap, a deep design, a fallacy. It is to be avoided in addressing a judge who has power to decide, and especially in addressing tyrants, kings, governors, or anybody in a high place. Such a person immediately becomes angry if he is led astray like a foolish child by some skilful orator's figures. He takes the fallacy as indicating contempt for himself. He becomes like a wild animal. Even if he controls his temper, he is now completely conditioned against being convinced by what is said. A figure is therefore generally thought to be best when the fact that it is a figure is concealed.

[17.2] Thus sublimity and emotion are a defence and a marvellous aid against the suspicion which the use of figures engenders. The artifice of the trick is lost to sight in the surrounding brilliance of beauty and grandeur, and it escapes all suspicion. 'By the men of Marathon . . . is proof enough. For how did Demosthenes conceal the figure in that passage? By sheer bril-

liance, of course. As fainter lights disappear when the sunshine surrounds them, so the sophisms of rhetoric are dimmed when they are enveloped in encircling grandeur. [17.3] Something like this happens in painting: when light and shadow are juxtaposed in colours on the same plane, the light seems more prominent to the eye, and both stand out and actually appear much nearer. Similarly, in literature, emotional and sublime features seem closer to the mind's eye, both because of a certain natural kinship and because of their brilliance. Consequently, they always show up above the figures, and overshadow and eclipse their artifice.

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*Hyperbaton*

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[22.1] Hyperbaton is an arrangement of words or thoughts which differs from the normal sequence . . .<sup>8</sup> It is a very real mark of urgent emotion. People who in real life feel anger, fear, or indignation, or are distracted by jealousy or some other emotion (it is impossible to say how many emotions there are; they are without number), often put one thing forward and then rush off to another, irrationally inserting some remark, and then hark back again to their first point. They seem to be blown this way and that by their excitement, as if by a veering wind. They inflict innumerable variations on the expression, the thought, and the natural sequence. Thus hyperbaton is a means by which, in the best authors, imitation approaches the effect of nature. Art is perfect when it looks like nature, nature is felicitous when it embraces concealed art. Consider the words of Dionysius of Phocaea in Herodotus:<sup>9</sup> 'Now, for our affairs are on the razor's edge, men of Ionia, whether we are to be free or slaves—and worse than slaves, runaways—so if you will bear hardships now, you will suffer temporarily but be able to overcome your enemies.' [22.2] The natural order of thought would have been: 'Men of Ionia, now is the time for you to bear hardships, for our affairs are on the razor's edge.' The speaker has displaced 'men of Ionia'; he begins with the cause of fear, as though the alarm was so pressing that he did not even have time to address the audience by name. He has also diverted the order of thought. Before saying that they must suffer hardship themselves (that is the gist of his exhortation), he first gives the reason why it is necessary, by saying 'our affairs are on the razor's edge'. The result is that he seems to be giving not a premeditated speech but one forced on him by the circumstances.

[22.3] It is even more characteristic of Thucydides to show ingenuity in separating by transpositions even things which are by nature completely unified and indivisible.

Demosthenes is less wilful in this than Thucydides, but no one uses this kind of effect more lavishly. His transpositions produce not only a great sense of urgency but the appearance of extemporization, as he drags his hearers with him into the hazards of his long hyperbata. [22.4] He often holds in suspense the meaning which he set out to convey and, introducing one extra-

8. Probably a few words are missing here [translator's note].

of Lade (494 B.C.E.), which the Persians won. In the ancient world, defeated peoples were often enslaved.

9. *Histories* 6.11 [translator's note]. Dionysius of Phocaea: commander of Greek fleet in the battle

5. The section on the second source of the sublimine, strong emotion, is missing from the extant Greek manuscript.

7. At Marathon, the Athenians aided by the Plataeans became the first Greeks to defeat the Persians (490 B.C.E.); near the island of Salamis, the Persian fleet was routed by combined Greek forces (480 B.C.E.).

6. The passage discussed is in *Orations* 18.208 [translator's note].

neous item after another in an alien and unusual place before getting to the main point, throws the hearer into a panic lest the sentence collapse altogether, and forces him in his excitement to share the speaker's peril, before, at long last and beyond all expectation, appositely paying off at the end the long due conclusion; the very audacity and hazardousness of the hyperbata add to the astounding effect. There are so many examples that I forbear to give any.

\* \* \*

#### *Conclusion of the Section on Figures*

[29.2] So much, my dear Terentianus, by way of digression on the theory of the use of those figures which conduce to sublimity. They all make style more emotional and excited, and emotion is as essential a part of sublimity as characterization is of charm.

#### *(iv) Diction: General Remarks*

[30.1] Thought and expression are of course very much involved with each other. We have therefore next to consider whether any topics still remain in the field of diction. The choice of correct and magnificent words is a source of immense power to entice and charm the hearer. This is something which all orators and other writers cultivate intensely. It makes grandeur, beauty, old-world charm, weight, force, strength, and a kind of lustre bloom upon our words as upon beautiful statues; it gives things life and makes them speak. But I suspect there is no need for me to make this point; you know it well. It is indeed true that beautiful words are the light that illuminates thought.

[30.2] Magniloquence, however, is not always serviceable: to dress up trivial material in grand and solemn language is like putting a huge tragic mask on a little child. In poetry and history, however . . .

#### *Use of Everyday Words*

\* \* \*

[31.1] Theopompus<sup>2</sup> much-admired phrase seems to me to be particularly expressive because of the aptness of the analogy, though Caecilius manages to find fault with it: 'Philip was excellent at stomachaching facts.' An idiomatic phrase is sometimes much more vivid than an ornament of speech, for it is immediately recognized from everyday experience, and the familiar is inevitably easier to credit. 'To stomach facts' is thus used vividly of a man who endures unpleasantness and squalor patiently, and indeed with pleasure, for the sake of gain. [31.2] There are similar things in Herodotus: 'Cleomenes in his madness cut his own flesh into little pieces with a knife till he had sliced himself to death'; 'Pythes continued fighting on the ship until he was cut into joints.'<sup>3</sup> These phrases come within an inch of being vulgar, but they are so expressive that they avoid vulgarity.

1. Lacuna equivalent to about four pages [translator's note].  
2. Greek historian (b. ca. 378 B.C.E.).  
3. *Histories* 6.75, 7.181 [translator's note]. Cleo-

#### *Metaphors*

[32.1] As regards number of metaphors, Caecilius seems to agree with the propounders of the rule that not more than two or at most three may be used of the same subject. Here too Demosthenes is our canon. The right occasions are when emotions come flooding in and bring the multiplication of metaphors with them as a necessary accompaniment. [32.2] 'Vile flatterers, multipliers of their countries, who have given away liberty as a drinking present, first to Philip and now to Alexander, measuring happiness by the belly and the basest impulses, overthrowing liberty and freedom from despotism, which Greeks of old regarded as the canons and standards of the good.'<sup>4</sup> In this passage the orator's anger against traitors obscures the multiplicity of his metaphors.

[32.3] This is why Aristotle and Theophrastus<sup>5</sup> say that there are ways of softening bold metaphors—namely by saying 'as if', 'as it were', 'if I may put it so', or 'if we may venture on a bold expression'. Apology, they say, is a remedy for audacity. [32.4] I accept this doctrine, but I would add—and I said the same about figures—that strong and appropriate emotions and genuine sublimity are a specific palliative for multiplied or daring metaphors, because their nature is to sweep and drive all these other things along with the surging tide of their movement. Indeed it might be truer to say that they demand the hazardous. They never allow the hearer leisure to count the metaphors, because he too shares the speaker's enthusiasm.

[32.5] At the same time, nothing gives distinction to commonplaces and descriptions so well as a continuous series of tropes.<sup>6</sup> This is the medium in which the description of man's bodily tabernacle is worked out so elaborately in Xenophon and yet more superlatively by Plato.<sup>7</sup> Thus Plato calls the head the 'citadel' of the body; the neck is an 'isthmus' constructed between the head and the chest; the vertebrae, he says, are fixed underneath 'like pivots'. Pleasure is a 'lure of evil' for mankind; the tongue is a 'taste-meter'. The heart is a 'knot of veins' and 'fountain of the blood that moves impetuously round', allocated to the 'guard-room'. The word he uses for the various passages of the canals is 'alleys'. 'Against the throbbing of the heart,' he continues, 'in the expectation of danger and in the excitation of anger, when it gets hot, they contrived a means of succour, implanting in us the lungs, soft, bloodless, and with cavities, a sort of cushion, so that when anger boils up in the heart, the latter's throbbing is against a yielding obstacle, so that it comes to no harm.' Again: he calls the seat of the desires 'the women's quarters', and the seat of anger 'the men's quarters'. The spleen is for him 'a napkin for the inner parts, which therefore grows big and festering through being filled with secretions'. 'And thereafter', he says again, 'they buried the whole under a canopy of flesh', putting the flesh on 'as a protection against dangers from without, like felting'. Blood he called 'fodder of the flesh'. For the purpose of nutrition, he says also, 'they irrigated the body, cutting channels as in gardens, so that the streams of the veins might flow as it were from an incoming stream, making the body an aqueduct'. Finally: when the end is at hand, the soul's 'ship's cables' are 'loosed', and she herself 'set free'.

4. Demosthenes 18.296 [translator's note].  
5. Greek philosopher and naturalist (ca. 370-ca. 285 B.C.E.), pupil and successor of Aristotle.  
6. Figures of speech.

7. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4.5ff.; Plato, *Tymaeus* 65c-85c ('Longinus' picks various details out of this long passage, and runs them together) [translator's note].



[32.6] The passage contains countless similar examples; but these are enough to make my point, namely that tropes are naturally grand, that metaphors conduce to sublimity, and that passages involving emotion and description are the most suitable field for them. [32.7] At the same time, it is plain without my saying it that the use of tropes, like all other good things in literature, always tempts one to go too far. This is what people ridicule most in Plato, who is often carried away by a sort of literary madness into crude, harsh metaphors or allegorical fustian. 'It is not easy to understand that a city ought to be mixed like a bowl of wine, wherein the wine seethes with madness, but when chastened by another, sober god, and achieving a proper communion with him, produces a good and moderate drink.'<sup>8</sup> To call water 'a sober god', says the critic, and mixture 'chastening', is the language of a poet who is far from sober himself.

#### Digression: *Genius versus Mediocrity*

[32.8] Faults of this kind formed the subject of Caecilius' attack in his book on Lysias,<sup>9</sup> in which he had the audacity to declare Lysias in all respects superior to Plato. He has in fact given way without discrimination to two emotions: loving Lysias more deeply than he loves himself, he yet hates Plato with an even greater intensity. His motive, however, is desire to score a point, and his assumptions are not, as he believed, generally accepted. In preferring Lysias to Plato he thinks he is preferring a faultless and pure writer to one who makes many mistakes. But the facts are far from supporting his view.

[33.1] Let us consider a really pure and correct writer. We have then to ask ourselves in general terms whether grandeur attended by some faults of execution is to be preferred, in prose or poetry, to a modest success of impeccable soundness. We must also ask whether the greater *number* of good qualities or the greater good qualities ought properly to win the literary prizes. These questions are relevant to a discussion of sublimity, and urgently require an answer.

[33.2] I am certain in the first place that great geniuses are least 'pure'. Exactness in every detail involves a risk of meanness; with grandeur, as with great wealth, there ought to be something overlooked. It may also be inevitable that low or mediocre abilities should maintain themselves generally at a correct and safe level, simply because they take no risks and do not aim at the heights, whereas greatness, just because it is greatness, incurs danger.

[33.3] I am aware also of a second point. All human affairs are, in the nature of things, better known on their worse side; the memory of mistakes is ineffaceable, that of goodness is soon gone. [33.4] I have myself cited not a few mistakes in Homer and other great writers, not because I take pleasure in their slips, but because I consider them not so much voluntary mistakes as oversights let fall at random through inattention and with the negligence of genius. I do, however, think that the greater good qualities, even if not consistently maintained, are always more likely to win the prize—if for no other reason, because of the greatness of spirit they reveal. Apollonius makes no mistakes in the *Argonautica*; Theocritus' is very felicitous in the *Pastorals*,

8. *Laws* 773c-d [translator's note].

9. Greek orator (ca. 459-ca. 380 B.C.E.) who reacted against the grandiose manner of Gorgias, striving for common language, pure diction, and lucidity rather than powerful emotional appeals.

apart from a few passages not connected with the theme; but would you rather be Homer or Apollonius? [33.5] Is the Eratosthenes<sup>2</sup> of that flawless little poem *Erigone* a greater poet than Archilochus, with his abundant, uncontrolled flood, that bursting forth of the divine spirit which is so hard to bring under the rule of law? Take lyric poetry: would you rather be Bacchylides or Pindar?<sup>3</sup> Take tragedy: would you rather be Ion of Chios or Sophocles?<sup>4</sup> Ion and Bacchylides are impeccable, uniformly beautiful writers in the polished manner; but it is Pindar and Sophocles who sometimes set the world on fire with their vehemence, for all that their flame often goes out without reason and they collapse dismally. Indeed, no one in his senses would reckon all Ion's works put together as the equivalent of the one play *Oedipus*.

[34.1] If good points were totted up, not judged by their real value, Hyperides would in every way surpass Demosthenes. He is more versatile, and has more good qualities. He is second-best at everything, like a pentathlon competitor; always beaten by the others for first place, he remains the best of the non-specialists. [34.2] In fact, he reproduces all the good features of Demosthenes, except his word-arrangement, and also has for good measure the excellences and graces of Lysias. He knows how to talk simply where appropriate; he does not deliver himself of everything in the same tone, like Demosthenes. His expression of character has sweetness and delicacy. Urbanity, sophisticated sarcasm, good breeding, skill in handling irony, humour neither rude nor tasteless but flavoured with true Attic salt,<sup>5</sup> an ingenuity in attack with a strong comic element and a sharp sting to its apt fun—all this produces inimitable charm. He has moreover great talents for exciting pity, and a remarkable facility for narrating myths with copiousness and developing general topics with fluency. For example, while his account of Leto is in his more poetic manner, his Funeral Speech is an unrivalled example of the epideictic style.<sup>6</sup> [34.3] Demosthenes, by contrast, has no sense of character. He lacks fluency, smoothness, and capacity for the epideictic manner; in fact he is practically without all the qualities I have been describing. When he forces himself to be funny or witty, he makes people laugh at him rather than with him. When he wants to come near to being charming, he is furthest removed from it. If he had tried to write the little speech on Phryne or that on Athenogenes,<sup>7</sup> he would have been an even better advertisement for Hyperides. [34.4] Yet Hyperides' beauties, though numerous, are without grandeur: 'inert in the heart of a sober man', they leave the hearer at peace. Nobody feels frightened reading Hyperides.

But when Demosthenes begins to speak, he concentrates in himself excellences finished to the highest perfection of his sublime genius—the intensity of lofty speech, living emotions, abundance, acuteness, speed where speed

2. Eratosthenes of Cyrene (ca. 275–194 B.C.E.), Greek poet, critic, geographer, and astronomer.

3. Major Greek lyric poet (518–438 B.C.E.), known for his elaborate odes (gnomia) celebrating victories in athletic and music contests. Bacchylides (ca. 524–ca. 452), Greek lyric poet also known for his odes.

4. One of the great Greek tragedians (ca. 496–406 B.C.E.), best known for his *Oedipus* trilogy. Ion of Chios (ca. 490–ca. 421 B.C.E.), Greek poet famed chiefly for his tragedies, none of which has survived.

5. Elegant wit.

6. The speech (*Dolias*) in which the myth of Leto was told is lost; the Funeral Speech is extant (*Orator* 2) [translator's note].<sup>a</sup> The epideictic style"; speech designed for delivery at festivals and funeral orations; it is distinguished from forensic oratory (for law courts) and deliberative (political) oratory. Leto: the mother of the Greek deities Apollo and Artemis.

7. The first is lost; the second is *Orator* 3 (5) [translator's note]. Phryne (4th c. B.C.E.), celebrated Greek courtesan. Athenogenes: Athenian businessman who was the subject of Hyperides' "Against Athenogenes."

is vital, all his unapproachable vehemence and power. He concentrates it all in himself—they are divine gifts, it is almost blasphemous to call them human—and so outpoints all his rivals, compensating with the beauties he has even for those which he lacks. The crash of his thunder, the brilliance of his lightning make all other orators, of all ages, insignificant. It would be easier to open your eyes to an approaching thunderbolt than to face up to his unremitting emotional blows.

[35.1] To return to Plato and Lysias, there is, as I said, a further difference between them. Lysias is much inferior not only in the importance of the good qualities concerned but in their number; and at the same time he exceeds Plato in the number of his failings even more than he falls short in his good qualities.

[35.2] What then was the vision which inspired those divine writers who disdained exactness of detail and aimed at the greatest prizes in literature? Above all else, it was the understanding that nature made man to be no humble or lowly creature, but brought him into life and into the universe as into a great festival, to be both a spectator and an enthusiastic contestant in its competitions. She implanted in our minds from the start an irresistible desire for anything which is great and, in relation to ourselves, supernatural.

[35.3] The universe therefore is not wide enough for the range of human speculation and intellect. Our thoughts often travel beyond the boundaries of our surroundings. If anyone wants to know what we were born for, let him look round at life and contemplate the splendour, grandeur, and beauty in which it everywhere abounds. [35.4] It is a natural inclination that leads us to admire not the little streams, however pellucid and however useful, but the Nile, the Danube, the Rhine, and above all the Ocean. Nor do we feel so much awe before the little flame we kindle, because it keeps its light clear and pure, as before the fires of heaven, though they are often obscured. We do not think our flame more worthy of admiration than the craters of Etna,<sup>8</sup> whose eruptions bring up rocks and whole hills out of the depths, and sometimes pour forth rivers of the earth-born, spontaneous fire. [35.5] A single comment fits all these examples: the useful and necessary are readily available to man, it is the unusual that always excites our wonder.

[36.1] So when we come to great geniuses in literature—where, by contrast, grandeur is not divorced from service and utility—we have to conclude that such men, for all their faults, tower far above mortal stature. Other literary qualities prove their users to be human; sublimity raises us towards the spiritual greatness of god. Freedom from error does indeed save us from blame, but it is only greatness that wins admiration. [36.2] Need I add that every one of those great men redeems all his mistakes many times over by a single sublime stroke? Finally, if you picked out and put together all the mistakes in Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and all the other really great men, the total would be found to be a minute fraction of the successes which those heroic figures have to their credit. Posterity and human experience—judges whose sanity envy cannot question—place the crown of victory on their heads. They keep their prize irrevocably, and will do so

so long as waters flow and tall trees flourish.<sup>9</sup>

8. An active volcano in Sicily.

9. "Epigram on the tomb of Midas," ascribed to

[36.3] It has been remarked that 'the failed Colossus is no better than the Doryphorus of Polyclitus'.<sup>1</sup> There are many ways of answering this. We may say that accuracy is admired in art and grandeur in nature, and it is *by nature* that man is endowed with the power of speech; or again that statues are expected to represent the human form, whereas, as I said, something higher than human is sought in literature.

[36.4] At this point I have a suggestion to make which takes us back to the beginning of the book. Impeccability is generally a product of art; erratic excellence comes from natural greatness; therefore, art must always come to the aid of nature, and the combination of the two may well be perfection.

It seemed necessary to settle this point for the sake of our inquiry; but everyone is at liberty to enjoy what he takes pleasure in.

\* \* \*

#### (v) Word-Arrangement or Composition

[39.1] There remains the fifth of the factors contributing to sublimity which we originally enumerated. This was a certain kind of composition or word-arrangement. Having set out my conclusions on this subject fully in two books, I shall here add only so much as is essential for our present subject.

#### Effect of Rhythm

Harmony is a natural instrument not only of conviction and pleasure but also to a remarkable degree of grandeur and emotion. [39.2] The *aulos*<sup>2</sup> fills the audience with certain emotions and makes them somehow beside themselves and possessed. It sets a rhythm, it makes the hearer move to the rhythm and assimilate himself to the tune, 'untouched by the Muses though he be'.<sup>3</sup> The notes of the lyre, though they have no meaning, also, as you know, often cast a wonderful spell of harmony with their varied sounds and blended and mingled notes. [39.3] Yet all these are but spurious images and imitations of persuasion, not the genuine activities proper to human nature of which I spoke.<sup>4</sup> Composition, on the other hand, is a harmony of words, man's natural instrument, penetrating not only the ears but the very soul. It arouses all kinds of conceptions of words and thoughts and objects, beauty and melody—all things native and natural to mankind. The combination and variety of its sounds convey the speaker's emotions to the minds of those around him and make the hearers share them. It fits his great thoughts into a coherent structure by the way in which it builds up patterns of words. Shall we not then believe that by all these methods it bewitches us and elevates to grandeur, dignity, and sublimity both every thought which comes within its compass and ourselves as well, holding as it does complete domination over our minds? It is absurd to question facts so generally agreed. Experience is proof enough.

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1. It is not certain whether "Longinus" means the Colossus of Rhodes or some other large statue. For the Doryphorus, famous for its proportions, see, e.g., G. M. A. Richter, *Handbook of Greek Art* (Phaidon, 1959), 110 [translator's note]. Polyclitus: a leading Greek sculptor of the second half of the 5th c. B.C.E. (a number of copies of his Dory-

phoros exist).  
2. A reed instrument (often translated "pipe" or "flute").  
3. Euripides, frag. 663 Nauck [translator's note].  
4. Presumably in the work referred to in 39.1 [translator's note].

Homer: see Plato, *Phaedrus* 264d [translator's note].



## Effect of Period Structure

[40.1] I come now to a principle of particular importance for lending grandeur to our words. The beauty of the body depends on the way in which the limbs are joined together, each one when severed from the others having nothing remarkable about it, but the whole together forming a perfect unity. Similarly great thoughts which lack connection are themselves wasted and waste the total sublime effect, whereas if they co-operate to form a unity and are linked by the bonds of harmony, they come to life and speak just by virtue of the periodic structure.<sup>5</sup> It is indeed generally true that, in periods, grandeur results from the total contribution of many elements.

[40.2] I have shown elsewhere that many poets and other writers who are not naturally sublime, and may indeed be quite unqualified for grandeur, and who use in general common and everyday words which carry with them no special effect, nevertheless acquire magnificence and splendour, and avoid being thought low or mean, solely by the way in which they arrange and fit together their words. Philistus, Aristophanes<sup>6</sup> sometimes, Euripides generally, are among the many examples. [40.3] Thus Heracles says after the killing of the children:

I'm full of troubles, there's no room for more.<sup>7</sup>

This is a very ordinary remark, but it has become sublime, as the situation demands. If you re-arrange it, it will become apparent that it is in the composition, not in the sense, that Euripides' greatness appears.

[40.4] Dirce is being pulled about by the bull:

And where it could, it writhed and twisted round,  
dragging at everything, rock, woman, oak,  
juggling with them all.<sup>8</sup>

The conception is fine in itself, but it has been improved by the fact that the word-harmony is not hurried and does not run smoothly; the words are propped up by one another and rest on the intervals between them; set wide apart like that, they give the impression of solid strength.

\* \* \*

## Conclusion

[43.6] There is no urgent need to enumerate in detail features which produce a low effect. We have explained what makes style noble and sublime; the opposite qualities will obviously make it low and undignified.

\* \* \*

1st century C.E.

5. A sentence (i.e., a "period") composed of intricately balanced main and dependent clauses, often artfully arranged to create a sense of anticipation.

6. Major Greek comic dramatist (ca. 450-ca. 385 B.C.E.). Philistus (ca. 430-356 B.C.E.), Greek historian of Sicily.

7. Euripides, *Hercules Furens* 1245 [translator's note].

8. From Euripides' lost *Antiope* (frag. 221 Nauck) [translator's note]. The quote describes how the mythical Dirce died. She was tied to the tail of a bull by Antiope's sons, who were attempting to avenge the mistreatment Dirce inflicted on their mother.

## QUINTILIAN

ca. 30/35-ca. 100

Coming at the height of the classical period, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (*Institutes of Rhetoric*) stands as one of the most important statements of Roman rhetorical theory and practice. Its influence extends from medieval and Renaissance philosophers and literary figures, such as AUGUSTINE, HUGH OF ST. VICTOR, and John of Salisbury, to eighteenth-century critics like ALEXANDER POPE, who praised "Quintilian's copious work," wherein was found "the justest rules, and clearest method joined." Even today, it would be difficult to follow discussions of rhetorical language in more recent formalist and poststructuralist theorists such as ROMAN JAKOBSON, CLEANTH BROOKS, JACQUES DERRIDA, and PAUL DE MAN without the kind of technical knowledge of how tropes work so lucidly explained in Quintilian's rhetoric.

Describing the education of the rhetorician from childhood to adulthood, the *Institutio Oratoria* combines detailed accounts of various rhetorical techniques, including the invention and arrangement of discourse, and descriptions of the various figures of speech and thought; it adds philosophic speculation on the proper uses of rhetoric. Because he is a practitioner and teacher of rhetoric, Quintilian does not equate the rhetorician's task with the philosopher's. However, he was an astute enough observer of his own time to fear the potential for corruption and manipulation in rhetoric. The skills he teaches in the *Institutio Oratoria* might easily be used by "harlots, flatterers, and seducers." But unlike the Greek rhetorician GORGAS, who noted that rhetoric might as easily be used to promote evil as virtue, Quintilian is not content to accept rhetoric's moral neutrality. He advocates the study of philosophy as a necessary component of a rhetorician's training to ensure that the good orator will also be a good person. Quintilian's teachings, then, contain an ethical imperative that he shares with PLATO, HORACE, LONGINUS, and Augustine. Its legacy, which has permeated the history of literary criticism, is the widely held idea that the study of literature is worthwhile because it can make us more virtuous and discriminating, while instilling in us proper moral values.

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus was born at Calagurris in Spain sometime between 30 and 35 C.E. His father, who may have been a Roman rhetorician, sent his son to Rome to study rhetoric. After finishing his education, Quintilian returned for a short while to his native Spain. However, by 68 he was back in the Roman capital teaching and practicing law. Quintilian became a famous teacher, the first rhetorician to found a public school and receive a state salary. Among his students was the celebrated Roman writer Pliny the Younger. When he retired from teaching in 88, he was appointed by the emperor Domitian as tutor to his two great-nephews and heirs. Quintilian's family life, however, seems to have been much less successful than his public one. The introduction to book 6 of the *Institutio Oratoria* contains a moving description of the death of his son, whom he intended as one of the beneficiaries of his pedagogical advice, as well as expressions of grief over the death of his wife at the age of nineteen and the loss of another son. The date of Quintilian's death is unknown, but it was very probably sometime around 100 C.E.

The *Institutio Oratoria*, the only extant text by Quintilian, was written during the last years of Domitian's reign (which ended with the emperor's murder in 96 C.E.) against a backdrop of political unrest; during this time, the emperor had turned to persecution to maintain his rule, executing people on the flimsiest of excuses and banishing all the philosophers from Rome for fear they would incite people to rebellion. Quintilian's continued favor with the emperor was, therefore, so remarkable that it has led some to question his integrity.

*Institutio Oratoria*, which might more accurately be translated *On the Teaching of*